

A

**2008 ELECTIONS: REALIGNMENT OF THE AMERICAN
POLITICAL MAP**

by
LEONID BALABAN
B.A., University of Colorado Denver, 2000

A thesis submitted to the
University of Colorado Denver
in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree of
Master of Social Science
Department of Social Sciences

2009

This thesis for the Master of Social Science

degree by

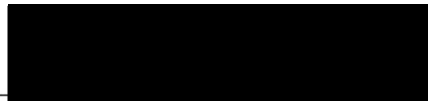
Leonid Balaban

has been approved

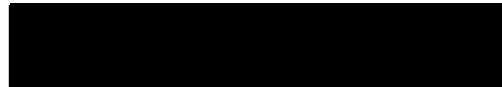
by



Anthony Robinson



Michael Cummings



Myra Bookman

Nov 30, 2009

Date

Balaban, Leonid (M.S., Master of Social Sciences)

2008 Elections: Realignment of the American political map.

Thesis directed by Professor Tony Robinson

ABSTRACT

The main purpose for this thesis is to investigate and test the possibility that electoral realignment in the U.S. took place between 2004 through 2008. Evidence, based on some initial empirical indicators and scholarly analysis, will be presented, that the 2008 Presidential and Congressional elections signaled a continuous movement of the political pendulum from a conservative/right position to a more liberal/left one. This thesis will present information on the potential endurance and effectiveness of the currently governing Democratic coalition, which is important for the sake of identifying the longevity of the possible realignment. Furthermore, it will identify apparent changes in the composition of American electorate, and as a consequence, if realignment indeed took place, exploration of potential differences of the realignment effects on four geographical areas of the country: the coastal states of the Northeast and West, Midwest, Deep South and the Western/Mountain states will be made. To investigate these aforementioned questions, empirical evidence from the 2004-2008 elections, which many are claiming count as realigning elections, will be

compared and contrasted to the last two realigning periods in American history,
which many scholars agree culminated with the 1932 and 1968 elections.

This abstract accurately represents the content of the candidate's thesis. I recommend
its publication.

Signed

A black rectangular box redacting the signature, with a horizontal line extending to the right.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family for their continuous support during the period of time while I was writing this paper. I also would like to thank members of my committee for their academic guidance, encouragement and understanding during this past year of my study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Figures 4.1 – 5.1	viii
Tables 4.1 – 5.5	ix

CHAPTER

1. INTRODUCTION	1
Realignment Theory	4
Mayhew's Realignment testing method	10
2. HISTORY OF REALIGNING PERIODS IN THE U.S. AND THEIR CYCLICAL NATURE	16
3. THE FIRST MOTOR	27
4. THE SECOND MOTOR	40
5. VOTER TURNOUT	46
6. TURMOIL DURING PARTY CONVENTIONS	53
7. PERFORMANCE OF THE THIRD PARTIES	63
8. A NEW DOMINANT VOTER CLEAVAGE, IDEOLOGICAL POLARIZATION OF THE ELECTORATE AND NATIONAL ISSUE-BASED ELECTION IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	71
9. MAJOR CHANGES IN GOVERNMENTAL POLICY AND REDISTRIBUTIVE EFFECTS OF NEW POLICIES	100

10. LONG SPANS IN UNIFIED PARTY CONTROL	111
11. EFFECTIVE EXPRESSION OF THE VOTING PUBLIC	116
12. CONCLUSION	122
13. EPILOGUE	129
APPENDIX	
A.	134
B.	143
REFERENCES.....	154

FIGURES

Figure

4.1	Party Identification Gap from 1976 to 2008, in Appendix 1A.	134
4.2	Party Identification Yearly Averages, Gallup Polls, 1988-2008.....	43
4.3	2002 Postelection State by State map representing Republican advantage in Party Identification, in Appendix 3A.....	136
4.4	Trend of changes in Party Identification, including leaners from 1991-2009, in Appendix 6A.....	141
4.5	Partisan Gap by Generational Group, in Appendix 7A.....	142
5.1	Voter turnout in U.S. elections from 1824-1968, in Appendix 1B	143

TABLES

Table

4.1	State by State changes in Party Identification from 1993 to 2002, in Appendix 2A	135
4.2	State by State shift of the electoral support towards the Democrats, in Appendix 4A	137
4.3	State by state Democratic Party advantage in Party Identification in 2007, in Appendix 5A	139
5.1	2008 General Election Voter Registration Statistics in the U.S., in Appendix 2B	144
5.2	General Election Voter Registration Statistics by party affiliation on State by State bases, in Appendix 3B.....	146
5.3	Voter Registration Statistics by party affiliation on State by State bases - change from 2004-2008, in Appendix 4B	148
5.4	2008 estimated voter turnout and turnout rate in the U.S. compared to the 2004 statistics, in Appendix 5B.....	150
5.5	National Voter turnout statistics for federal elections from 1960-2008 in the U.S., in Appendix 6B.	152

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Fundamentally, the November 4th outcome was completely predictable... The truth is this: any mainstream Democratic candidate was destined to win in 2008, when the age-old slogan, 'It's Time for a Change,' had powerful new meaning. The electoral conditions - the fundamentals I often call 'the north stars of politics' - could not have been more clear or bright in the sky. The north stars that applied to the 2008 contest were presidential popularity, economic conditions, and war and peace (Sabato, 2009).

The preceding conclusion concerning the results of the 2008 Presidential and Congressional elections, written by Larry J. Sabato, Professor of Politics at the University of Virginia, invite the following questions: did this so called "alignment of stars" that allowed the Democrats to increase their majorities in both houses of Congress and recapture the Presidency for only the 3rd time in last 40 years take place because of the cyclical nature of American elections? Is there empirical evidence that can consistently predict a changing political environment every 30-40 years (Mayhew, 2002, pg 16), as some observers have claimed? Do these 2008 elections, which arguably have completely transformed the political landscape of our country, represent a fundamental and enduring shift in the American political system, as it would in a cyclical political system, or is it just a temporary electoral blip or a spike in political tendencies of the electorate?

Many political scientists are inclined, at this point, to favor the notion that the results of the 2008 Presidential and Congressional elections in the United States represent a fundamental and long term realignment in American politics. The outcome of those elections,

in conjunction with the 2006 mid-terms, produced empirical evidence which shows a clear shift of the U.S. electorate towards the Democratic Party and away from the Republican Party, which as recently as 2004 had full control over both the legislative and executive branches of our government. Some believe this shift in support is part of a larger realignment of American politics.

Therefore, the main purpose for this thesis is to investigate and test the possibility that electoral realignment in the U.S. took place between 2004 through 2008. Evidence, based on some initial empirical indicators and scholarly analysis, will be presented, that the 2008 Presidential and Congressional elections signaled a continuous movement of the political pendulum from a conservative/right position to a more liberal/left one. Another important goal for this paper is to investigate the potential endurance and effectiveness of the currently governing Democratic coalition, which is important for the sake of identifying the longevity of the possible realignment. Furthermore, it is also scholastically imperative to identify apparent changes in the composition of American electorate. Was there a so called generational "turnover" in the electorate, meaning new voters replaced the old ones, or was the alleged realignment caused by a simple psychological change within the same electorate that only four years ago re-elected Republican president and allowed the GOP to regain control in both houses of Congress? As a consequence, if realignment indeed took place, I will explore potential differences of the realignment effects on four geographical areas of the country: the coastal states of the Northeast and West, Midwest, Deep South and the Western/Mountain states. To investigate these aforementioned questions, I will compare and contrast empirical evidence from the 2004-2008 elections, which many are claiming count as

realigning elections, to the last two realigning periods in American history, which many scholars agree culminated with the 1932 and 1968 elections.

Examining the questions of realignment and whether it actually took place in the last four years is important on many levels. Not only would it help to explain relatively recent changes that took place within the electorate, in terms of its demographical composition as well as its latest political tendencies, but also describe transformation within the field of public policy. Campbell and Trilling wrote that the scholarship surrounding the concept of realignment enhances “the study of the whole democratic process – that process by which the desires of the public are translated into public policy” (Campbell, Trilling, 1980, pg. ix). In essence, further enhancing the validity of the realigning theory in turn props up the notion that once a generation, there is a radical change in the direction of the public policy in the United States, both on the domestic and international fronts. Thus, if enough scientific evidence exists that realignment indeed took place in the last four years, it will also prove that the underlying nature of American politics – the Two Party political system is still functioning in a way it was designed by the founders.

On the other hand, it is within the realms of possibility that despite some initial indicators, realignment did not take place in the period from 2004-2008. If that indeed is the case, then it would be very appropriate to not only find out the reasons behind this theoretical divergence, but also question whether the realignment evaluation method was at fault and in turn needs to be amended. If it is found that realignment theory is not valid as it currently constructed, perhaps some fundamental changes would need to be made to it.

Realignment Theory

The concept of Electoral Realignment was first introduced by V.O. Key in his 1955 article called "A Theory of Critical Elections." He defined realigning elections as a unique category of elections in which:

voters are, at least from impressionistic evidence, unusually deeply concerned, in which the extent of electoral involvement is relatively quite high, and in which the decisive results of the voting reveal a sharp alteration of the pre-existing cleavage within the electorate...The truly differentiating characteristic of this sort of election[s], the realignment made manifest in the voting in such elections seems to persist for several succeeding elections. All these characteristics cumulate to the conception of an election type in which the depth and intensity of electoral involvement are high, in which more or less profound readjustments occur in the relations of power within the community, and in which new and durable electoral groupings are formed (Key, 1955, pg 4).

Four years later, Key somewhat revised his initial concept of sudden shifts within voting coalitions during realigning elections. In his 1959 article, "Secular Realignment and the Party System," he introduced a new concept of "secular" realignment – which meant that majority voting factions can change more gradually as opposed to more abruptly or swiftly (Key, 1959, 198-210). Key's theory has since propagated a substantial literature on the subject of electoral realignments. Campbell and Trilling, for instance, defined the concept of realignment as a political process when there is "a durable and significant redistribution of party support" (Campbell & Trilling, 1980, pg. 29). They also classified realignment as

'critical' when "the bulk of the redistribution takes place within reasonable defined time limits" (Campbell & Trilling, 1980, pg. 29). Furthermore, Campbell and Trilling introduced a concept of a 'critical election', which "initially displays most of major portion of the elements of a critical realignment in its results" (Campbell & Trilling, 1980, pg. 30).

Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes also took Key's original theory and amended it by classifying American elections into 3 different types: 'maintaining', 'deviating' and 'realigning'. "A maintaining election," they said, "is one in which the pattern of partisan attachments prevailing in the preceding period persists and is the primary influence on forces governing the vote" (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960, pg. 531). The 1988 election of George H.W. Bush (Bush 41) as the 41st President of the U.S., for instance, may be considered as one of the examples of the maintaining election. Following eight years of Ronald Reagan's presidency, Bush 41, who was Reagan's Vice-President for eight years, represented a continuation of his predecessor's policies. His victory and winning voter coalition closely mirrored those of Reagan in 1980 and 1984.¹

Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes went on to classify a deviating election as one where "the basic division of partisan loyalties is not seriously disturbed, but the attitude forces on the vote are such as to bring about the defeat of the majority party" (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960, pg. 533). They added that "after the personalities or events that deflected these forces from what we would expect on the basis of party have disappeared from the scene, the political balance returns to a level that more closely reflects the underlying division of partisan attachments" (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes,

¹ Leip, David. *Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections*. Retrieved from <http://www.uselectionatlas.org>.

1960, pg.533). The four authors concluded that “a deviating election is thus a temporary reversal that occurs during a period when one or the other party holds a clear advantage in the long-term preference of the electorate” (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960, pg. 533). A case in point of a deviating election could be a 1992 Presidential victory of Bill Clinton and his subsequent reelection in 1996. Clinton’s victory in 1992 was largely attributed to the strong showing of a 3rd party candidate – Ross Perot, who siphoned a lot of conservative support from Bush 41. But Clinton’s victory did not signal an end to the Republican-dominated electoral era. During Clinton’s eight years as President, the Republicans not only regained a majority in the Senate, but also captured control of the House of Representatives for the first time in 40 years. Furthermore, his economic agenda which included further promotion of the free global trade, Welfare reform, reduction of budget deficits, and lowering of interest rates, were arguably conservative economic policies which were widely supported by the Republicans and economic conservatives (Bartlett, 2004). In fact, Clinton’s famous phrase from one of his 1996 radio addresses that the “The era of big Government is over” (CNN, 1996) arguably highlighted his conservative economic tendencies and in some ways continued policies which were offered by Republican President Ronald Reagan (Goodwin, 2009). The eventual election of George W. Bush as the 43rd President, following the Clinton years, and his subsequent reelection in 2004 possibly confirmed the notion that the 1992 and 1996 Presidential elections were deviating.

Lastly, Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes characterized a realigning election by “the appearance of ‘a more or less durable realignment’ of party loyalties.” They said that in such an election, “popular feeling associated with politics is sufficiently intense that the basic partisan commitments of a portion of the electorate change” (Campbell, Converse, Miller and

Stokes, 1960, pg. 534). Noting Key's observation, Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes wrote that although every election has a potential of creating or strengthening voters' lasting loyalty to a political party, it is only during a sharp realignment where the number of those voters is so great. Most importantly, the authors observed a pattern where "changes in long-term party allegiances tend to be associated with great national crises" (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960, pg. 534). As a vivid example of a realigning election, Campbell brought forth the 1932 election, which featured "the most dramatic reversal of party alignments in [the 20th] century...associated with the Great Depression of the 1930's" (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960, pg. 534). He went on to say that the economic collapse that transpired during the Hoover Administration discredited the GOP so much that "it fell from its impressive majorities of the 1920's to a series of defeats, which in 1936 reached overwhelming dimensions" (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960, pg. 534).

Walter Burnham was one of the first scholars to note that electoral realignments emerge in time cycles, taking place fairly regularly, just about every thirty to thirty-eight years or so. He said that "historically speaking, at least, national critical realignments have not occurred at random. Instead, there has been a remarkably uniform periodicity in their appearance" (Burnham, 1970, pg 8, 26). Arthur Paulson concurred with this cyclical theory by saying that "a broad consensus in the literature places previous realignments in the 1830s, the 1860s, the 1890s, and the 1930s. The periodicity of realignments may reflect waves of economic modernization and political development, with new issues and interests accompanying the decline of old partisan alignments and the rise of new ones" (Paulson 2000, pg. xvi). He also added that newly formed electoral coalitions may reflect several varying combinations of voters including party switchers, a new generation of voters, as well

as the emergence of a portion of the electorate that has not previously voted in high levels, but has now mobilized for one reason or another. With that said, it is quite clear that realignment theory has changed over the decades, mainly due to the additional research on the subject. However, the original core principles of Key's theory still remain the same within the scope of new scholarship on realignment.

In a global sense, the realignment theory, as it currently stands, suggests that there is an element of predictability in American political system. Within that predictability notion, the theory proposes that fundamental changes inside the system itself or within the electorate occur with regular periodicity, every 32 to 40 years. Thus, realignment junctions and critical elections can be predicted with a fair degree of certainty. In a scope of political and social science, the realignment theory explains American political system as a pendulum that swings from one side to another with the aid of the forces of change within the society. The duration of each swing lasts about three to four decades or approximately one generation, after which the direction of the swing changes and new electoral cycle begins.

In some ways, the realignment theory relates with the theory of retrospective voting. In general terms, the main concept of the retrospective voting assumes that the electorate bases its voting decisions on the past performances of an incumbent party in power. If the voters perceive that an incumbent party accomplished positive results within a certain period of time (usually in-between the elections), then more likely than not, the propensity of reelection of candidates from that party rises. On the other hand, if an incumbent party performed poorly, then propensity to vote for that party falls.² Taken retrospective voting into

² Bendor, J., Kumar, S., & Siegel, D. A. (1 September, 2005). *V. O. Key Formalized: Retrospective Voting as an Adaptive Process*. Retrieved from http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p40005_index.html

consideration, realignment essentially takes place when voters become unhappy with the incumbent party's short and long term performance or overall direction of the country in terms of public policies. With that, the electorate changes its long term preference from one party towards another. Several decades later, the electorate sours on majority party and its policies and the political pendulum swings back towards the minority or opposition party, and with that, new realignment cycle begins.

Although in its current state the realignment theory has a solid footing within the political science domain, there are still some scholars who at times challenged either certain portions of the theory or its standing as a whole. Mayhew, who has designed a fifteen point metric which will be used extensively in this thesis as a method to test for the potential of realignment and a critical election in 2008, for instance argued that some methods which had been used by a number of scholars in the past to identify realignment periods do not reliably show the existence and the periodicity thereof (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 46-59). Paul Allen Beck, among others also questioned at times the viability of the realignment theory on the grounds that the realignment of the late 1960s did not fit the definitions initially established by V. O. Key (Rosenof, 2003, pg. 141). Rosenof wrote that many political scientists argued that what took place in the 1970s in this country should be considered as dealignment, as voters abandoned political parties as opposed to participation in the political process with one party or another (Rosenof, 2003, pg. 141). However, armed with latest empirical evidence, Paulson, among other scholars, argues that "dealignment perspective does not inherently discount the notion of periodic sea change in American elections and party systems" (Paulson, 2006, pg. 11) - the two notions which in many ways define American political system as unique and unparalleled.

Mayhew's Realignment testing method

Analyzing the 2006 and 2008 elections for the possibility of realignment will be done by utilizing one of the latest models for testing the theory, which was devised by David Mayhew. He wrote that realignment theory is "in principle empirically testable, or at least [it has] a testable empirical side" (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 13). Mayhew explained that realignment theory, by his estimation, had fifteen distinct key claims. He assessed that most of these claims can be empirically tested, since all but the last of the 15 claims "are universalistic in form – at least across the domain of American history. The last is historical" (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 13). In describing the fifteen key claims that could be tested in realignment theory, Mayhew noted that the first four items in his testable method "add up to the kind of content found in a cyclical theory of history – such as business-cycle theory. They feature a phenomenon that recurs, a specified periodicity of the recurrence, and two alternative causes of the alleged periodicity" (Mayhew 2002, pg. 13). Furthermore he classified the next six claims as those that "take up process events that are thought to map onto electoral realignments in various way" (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 13). Meaning, these claims explain relationships between election related events, such as voter turnout and movements along the line of party affiliation and the alleged realignment. The next four items take up issues relating to the effects on the governmental policy. Mayhew noted that the last claim is not easily classifiable, but still are part of a testable theory, in the whole.

The following are the fifteen claims which Mayhew devised to test elections for evidence of realignment:

1. Through the examination of patterns of voter support for parties over time, American national elections can be sorted into two kinds—a few specified realigning ones and a great many nonrealigning ones.
2. Electoral realignments have appeared in a pattern of regularity—that is, periodicity.
3. First motor: A dynamic of tension buildup has caused the oscillation in and out of the thirty-year-or-so realignment cycles.
4. Second motor: A strengthening and weakening of party identification has caused the oscillation in and out of the thirty-year-or-so realignment cycles.
5. Voter concern and turnout are unusually high in realigning elections.
6. Realignments are marked by turmoil in presidential conventions.
7. For one reason or another, good showings by third parties tend to stimulate, or at least to take place shortly before, realignments.
8. In an electoral realignment, a new dominant voter cleavage over interests, ideological tendencies, or issues replaces an old one.
9. Elections at realignment junctures are marked by insurgent-led ideological polarization.
10. At least as regards the U.S. House, realigning elections hinge on national issues, nonrealigning elections on local ones.
11. Electoral realignments are associated with major changes in government policy.
12. Electoral realignments bring on long spans of unified party control of the government—that is, of the House, Senate, and presidency; such spans are a precondition of major policy innovation.
13. Electoral realignments are distinctively associated with “redistributive” policies.
14. The American voting public expresses itself effectively and consequentially during electoral realignments, but not otherwise.
15. There existed a “System of 1896.”

Mayhew argues that although every election has its own distinct characteristics when it comes to voter participation, stability or the shifting preference of the electorate, history and research shows that realignment periods reveal distinct similarities between each other. The main approach of this thesis will be based on a replication of the Mayhew’s fifteen point model, testing the empirical data from the 2006-2008 elections against Mayhew’s indicators of realignment, with the exception of the last claim which is not really empirically testable and therefore will be omitted and thus will be omitted in this thesis. This is a timely scholarly

task since there is suggestive evidence that the 2008 election may indeed qualify as a “critical election.” Part of this evidence is the suggestive fact that several decades have passed since the last realignment period and the last critical election. Thus, taking into the consideration the cyclical nature of the realignments and the notion that the last critical election in the U.S. took place most likely in 1968 (Paulson, 2000, pg. 18), the hypothesis is that 2008 election occurred at precisely the right historical time to qualify as a critical/realigning election. I will test this hypothesis in the remaining chapters of this thesis.

In the second chapter of this thesis, I will discuss the first two claims in the Mayhew system, although they will not be directly tested against the 2006 and 2008 election data by themselves. The real purpose of examining these claims is to establish the notion that realigning periods and critical elections in the American history have indeed taken place and that they took place roughly every thirty to forty years throughout American history.

The third chapter will discuss Mayhew’s “First Motor” claim, which describes political tension buildup leading up to the realignment and a critical election. Thus, in addition to introducing historical occurrences of prior socio-economic and political tension buildup in prior realigning periods, I will comprehensively review political and economic news accounts relating to the 2006 and 2008 election cycles in order to explore the evidence of similarities between the current situation and realigning periods taking place 40 and 76 years ago respectively.

In the forth chapter of this thesis, I will explore party identification data and whether substantial changes in electoral partisanship can currently be considered as evidence of realignment. Chapter five will present evidence of voter turnout patterns and whether the

trend in increased participation in 2006 and 2008 compares favorably to other realigning periods.

In chapter six, I will discuss whether any significant events took place during the party primaries and for the lesser extent conventions, which could have contributed to irreconcilable party divisions leading up to the general elections. This particular section will be more relevant to the presidential elections of 2008 than the congressional elections in 2006 and 2008 respectively. Chapter seven will discuss whether Third parties had any effect on the outcome of the 2008 elections and to the lesser extent in 2006.

In chapter eight, I will explore whether new voter alliances have been formed within the U.S. electorate in the past two election cycles. I intend to delve into the differences between the new electoral coalition and that in 2004. Historical comparison to the 1968 and 1932 voting coalitions will be made as well. Within that chapter, I will also look into how polarized the new voter coalitions became in the recent elections and what were the key issues behind that polarization. Furthermore, I will explore whether those key issues were on the level of national importance (as in Mayhew's tenth point) or were more or less localized.

In chapter 9, I will explore whether Democrats have been able to introduce and implement radical changes to the governmental policies since the 2006 election. As a subsection to that analysis, I will delve into the potential redistributive effects of those policies, as in Mayhew's thirteenth point.

With the Democrats holding solid majorities in both houses of Congress and the Presidency, Chapter 10 will delve into the long term potential endurance of the party in the majority. Although elections of members of House of Representatives are much harder to

prognosticate, the electoral contests within the Senate are much easier to predict, since only a Third of that chamber is up for re-election in the next election cycle.

In chapter 11, I will discuss how effectively the voting public expressed itself during the 2006 and 2008 elections. I will explore whether voters wanted to go with the new governmental policy approach presented by the Democrats as opposed to just voting against the Republicans. Furthermore, within the scope of analyzing the effectiveness of the expression of the voting public, I will analyze whether the margin of victory by the Democrats in 2008 (and to lesser extent in 2006) in the Electoral College, popular vote and number of Congressional seats won can be considered a mandate to implement monumental changes to the governmental policies.

An examination of the results of the 2006 and 2008 elections in the U.S for potential signs of realignment can serve multiple purposes. Firstly, this thesis will produce evidence of whether there are any signs pointing to the confirmation or a repudiation of the hypothesis that the period spanning from 2006 through 2008 can be considered realigning, as described by the Realignment theory. Secondly, if it is proven that realignment did indeed take place, and the 2008 election was critical, then it ought to give us some early indicators of the future political direction of this country and thus allow us to make claims as to when the next realignment might take place. Although this thesis will present the latest scholarship relating to realignment theory, I will not much engage in the debate as to whether the theory is fundamentally right or wrong. Mayhew's fifteen claim system of testing for realignment will only be used as a method of testing whether recent elections do or do not count as "realigning." For the purpose of this thesis, it will be assumed that both realignment theory and Mayhew's system of testing for realignment are essentially valid. In other words, the

point of this thesis is to replicate and test Mayhew's theory against recent elections—not to debate realignment theory itself.

However, in the concluding section of this thesis I will propose suggestions on how realignment theory might be improved based on the findings of my research. Furthermore, I will offer readers my recommendations on whether there is a need to further validate the basic fundamentals of the realignment theory and Mayhew's system for testing it, in light of the latest developments.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF REALIGNING PERIODS IN THE U.S. AND THEIR CYCLICAL NATURE

V.O. Key, who developed the original theoretical core of the realignment theory, conceptualized realignments as periods in political history when “sharp and durable” changes take place within the political alignment of the voting electorate, and those rather radical transformations only take place during certain elections (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 14). Burnham added to that by saying that critical elections have differed in their kind from all other non-critical elections (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 14). Furthermore, Burnham supplemented the original concept by asserting that the realigning periods appear periodically, with each cycle emerging approximately once every thirty to thirty-eight years (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 16). Paul Allen Beck concurred with Burnham’s assessment, and also added that realignments are usually followed by a long period of time when politics are become normalized and stabilized (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 16).

From the historical perspective, up until 2008, the American political system can be divided into six distinct phases – party systems, which lasted approximately 32-40 years for the most part, and which were separated by a period of realignment. Each of those party systems was unique in their own way, but at the same time, they all displayed similarities with each other as well. The first party system was born right after the 1789 election of George Washington as the first President of the U.S., who ran virtually unopposed in his

campaign³, and as the only President who did not align himself to a particular political party. Almost four years later, in the 1792 congressional elections, the Federalists (supporters of the strong federal government) had formed a political party and ran against the Anti-Federalists (supporters of the loose confederacy) who themselves evolved into a Democratic - Republican Party. Grier Stephenson points out that although the Federalist Party initially dominated political field in the original 13 states, their run was rather short lived as Democratic-Republicans replaced them “as the ruling party after 1800, when Thomas Jefferson became president. The Federalists gradually faded away as a credible political force and by 1820 there was no candidate for the presidency running as a Federalist (Stephenson, 1999, pg. 28).

The domination of the Democratic-Republican Party grew so much, that the years 1816-1824 almost completely lacked any sort of partisan confrontation and this period was subsequently called the “Era of Good Feeling.” This epoch period reached its peak in the election of 1820, when President James Monroe “was re-elected with all but one electoral vote - a vote withheld only due to the voter’s concern that George Washington should remain as the sole president elected unanimously.”⁴ Furthermore, the supremacy of the Democratic-Republican Party was evident not only in the Presidential elections, but also in House and Senate elections. In fact, from 1801 through 1824, the Democratic Republican Party enjoyed a 24 year period of uninterrupted unified control of both the executive and legislative (House

³ Dykman, J. & Gregory, S. (4 November, 2008). 10 Elections That Changed America. *Time Magazine*. Retrieved from http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1856551_1856544_1856530,00.html

⁴ Rutgers University. *Archive of American Politics: “Era of Good Feeling”*. Retrieved from <http://www.eagleton.rutgers.edu/e-gov/e-politicalarchive-goodfeeling.htm>

of Representatives and the Senate) branches of our government.⁵ From the historical perspective, this type of political domination has never been replicated as of 2008. As a matter of comparison, Republicans had achieved only 14 years of unified control from 1897-1911, and Democrats accomplished the same from 1933-1947 (Campbell, Trilling, pg. 293).

Eventually, Stephenson notes, the era collapsed in 1824 when a rivalry for the presidency developed among four Democratic-Republican leaders: John Quincy Adams, William H. Crawford, Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson. Those challengers ended up splitting the electoral vote into four, with no one receiving a clear electorate majority. With some heavy political maneuvering, Clay steered the election towards Adams in the House of Representatives. Jackson and his supporters were furious of the outcome, with them alleging that corruption had taken place. The confrontation caused an irreparable rift within the Democratic-Republican Party which then split into a Democratic Party led by Jackson and the Whig Party led by Clay.

With that said, the first party system lasted approximately 32 years. The transitional period between 1824 through 1828 was the first actual realignment in the history of the American political system. This realignment period culminated with the critical election of Andrew Jackson in the 1828 Presidential elections, which in turn signaled the beginning of the second party system. In that monumental election, the Jackson won every state in the South and West while the incumbent Adams swept the electoral votes of every state in the North except Pennsylvania and part of New York.

⁵ United States Senate. *Party Division in the Senate, 1789- Present*. Retrieved from http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/history/one_item_and_teasers/partydiv.htm; Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives. *Party Divisions of the House of Representatives (1789 to Present)*. Retrieved from http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/partyDiv.html

The Second System featured what some might call an electoral revolution. From the mid 1820s through 1840s, most states repealed property qualifications for voting and office holding. Moreover, "direct methods of selecting presidential electors, county officials, state judges, and governors replaced indirect methods."⁶ Because of these and other political innovations, voter participation skyrocketed. "Twice as many voters cast ballots in the election of 1828 as in 1824, four times as many as in 1820."⁷ By 1840 voting participation had reached unprecedented levels. Nearly 80 percent of adult white males went to the polls."⁸ Even though each of the two major political parties "was stronger in some states than in others, nationally they were closely balanced. Between 1836 and 1852, [the] Democrats won the presidency in 1836, 1844, and 1852, while Whigs prevailed in 1840 and 1848."⁹ Additionally, both Whigs and the Democrats at some point between 1828 through 1850s were in control of one or both houses of Congress.

The Second Party system began to show signs of instability starting in the mid-1840s, as the Whigs and the Democrats "began to split along sectional lines over slavery extension, and that sectional rupture would ultimately help cause the system's demise in the mid-1850s."¹⁰ The American political system, during the 1850s, "became incapable of containing the sectional disputes between the North and South that had smoldered for more than half a

⁶ Mintz, S. (2007). Jacksonian Democracy: The Presidency of Andrew Jackson. *Digital History*. Retrieved from http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=637

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Mintz, S. (2007). Jacksonian Democracy: Rise of Democratic Politics. *Digital History*. Retrieved from http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=637

⁹ Holt, M. F. (2002). *Overview. Getting the Message Out! National Political Campaign Materials, 1840-1860*. Retrieved from <http://dig.lib.niu.edu/message/ps-overview.html>

¹⁰ Ibid

century.”¹¹ The Whig party collapsed and the Democratic Party split into Northern and Southern factions. “With the breakdown of the party system, the issues raised by slavery exploded. The bonds that had bound the country for more than seven decades began to unravel.”¹² Gordon Kleeberg concurred with that assessment, saying that the period between 1851 to 1859 was full of political transitions, during which “old political alignments in the United States were broken and gave place to new crystallization of voters; and in which also former political issues were supplanted by the paramount contest over slavery in the Territories” (Kleeberg, 1914, pg. 13). In 1854, following the Kansas-Nebraska Act, some thirty members of Congress agreed to form a new political party – the Republican Party (GOP), which initially consisted of a number of former members of the Whig Party, Free Soilers and Democrats (Kleeberg, 1914, pg. 13). With that, the Second Party system, which lasted just like the first one for approximately 32 years, was essentially over.

With the creation of the GOP, the second realignment in American history took place. It concluded with the critical election of 1860 when Abraham Lincoln was elected as the first Republican President. The third party system began during the period of the Civil War and lasted roughly 36 years, during which the Republican Party dominated the presidential elections. Due to its support for abolition of slavery, and other economic programs in conjunction to the Reconstruction, the GOP had won all but two presidential contests – in 1884 and in 1892. It is important to note, however, that during and following the Civil War, voters in Southern states, who were largely supporters of the Democratic Party, were disenfranchised, if they had fought on the side of the Confederacy. Moreover, with the

¹¹ Mintz, S. (2007). The Impending Crisis: The Slave Power Conspiracy. *Digital History*. Retrieved from http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=324

¹² Ibid

Reconstruction Act of 1876, Congress divided Southern states into five military districts, which led to the essential disenfranchisement of entire Southern region.¹³

After Reconstruction, the Democrats made solid political gains in the South, “where resentment by whites toward Republican domination of their region after the Civil War was high and when Southern blacks were prohibited from active participation in politics by the notorious Jim Crow laws” (Maisel, Buckley, 2004, pg. 43). Moreover, between 1874 to 1892 the Democrats would often control the House of Representatives. With that, by the time the third party system would run its course, the Southern states were solidly Democratic, while the Northern and Western states were mostly Republican. This type of electoral and geographical division among the two political parties would hold up for another seven decades – up until the 1968 elections.

On the surface, there was no obvious realignment that took place between the third and fourth party system. The fourth party system, which lasted roughly from the mid 1890s to 1932, unlike previous ones, did not represent a substantial electoral change per se. Yet, Paulson wrote that “the 1896 election established a normal Republican national majority with control of the Presidency and Congress” (Paulson, 2000, pg. 7). The Republican Party continued its domination when it came to the presidential elections, but the change in the fourth party system was represented by the supremacy in the control of the Congress as well as “the issues that separated the parties and the allegiances of large groups of voters” (Maisel, Buckley, 2004, pg. 48). In the aftermath of the 1896 election, the Republicans had solidified their base in the urban and north-east areas, while the Democrats’ electoral foundation was

¹³ Glass, A. (23 February, 2008). Mississippi readmitted to the Union Feb. 23, 1870. *Politico*. Retrieved from <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0208/8640.html>

mostly in the south and some western areas. From that point on, Maisel and Buckley wrote, “the Republicans would hold the White House for sixteen consecutive years and for twenty-eight of the next thirty-six years” (Maisel, Buckley, 2004, pg. 48). Only the Democrat Woodrow Wilson was able to break the mold by winning the presidency in 1912 and 1916 (Maisel, Buckley, 2004, pg. 48). The Democrats recaptured the reins of Congress during the Wilson’s presidency, but by 1920 the Republican coalition had regained its control of both branches of the U.S. government. The fourth party system which lasted for approximately 36 years was marked by some fairly progressive reforms, which included women finally attaining their right to vote.

The next realignment took place following the stock market crash in 1929 and following the Great Depression in the first two years of the 1930s. The midterm elections in 1930 showed the first signs of cracks within the Republican coalition, as the GOP lost 52 House seats and eventually lost control of that chamber.¹⁴ Moreover, the Democrats gained 8 seats in the Senate, bringing the party division within one seat: 47 for the Democrats and 48 for the GOP. Essentially, Maisel and Buckley wrote, “the American public blamed the Great Depression on Republican president Herbert Hoover and his party” (Maisel, Buckley, 2004, pg. 50). In the critical election of 1932, the populist message of economic reforms from the Democratic governor from New York Franklin Roosevelt (FDR) resonated with the voters, and he crushed the incumbent Republican Hoover at the polls by winning 472 to 59 in the

¹⁴ Before the first day of Congress, 14 representatives-elect died. The results of the special elections caused party control of the House to change and Democrats organized with the majority of the House seats. Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives. *Party Divisions of the House of Representatives (1789 to Present)*. Retrieved from http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/partyDiv.html#foot1

Electoral College, alongside capturing some 57 percent of the popular vote. With that, the fifth party system had begun, lasting for approximately 36 years.

The popularity of the New Deal programs and the overall approval of the Democrats by the electorate during the World War II was marked by the mandate like reelections up until the 1946 election. Even considering the fact that the Republicans regained control the Congress in 1946 and won presidential elections in both 1952 and 1956 – both by Dwight D. Eisenhower, these elections were seen as more or less as deviating. Eisenhower, by today's standards, was hardly a conservative as he expanded Social Security, trimmed the Defense budget and initiated the interstate highway system, one of the largest public works projects in American history.¹⁵

Having said that, Maisel and Buckley contended, the majority of the American electorate in the 1950s was still more aligned with the Democratic Party and its continuing New Deal policies. In the 1954 elections, the Democrats re-took the House of Representatives and didn't relinquish control of that chamber for another 40 years. In the same election, they also regained control of the Senate. With the elections of J.F. Kennedy in 1960 and Lyndon Johnson in 1964, the Democrats once again dominated the political landscape by controlling both the legislative and the executive branches of government.

In spite of that, by the middle 1960s the New Deal coalition was clearly eroding. The erosion actually started in 1948, when the Democratic Party was divided into 3 different camps: the Truman – status quo camp, the Progressive camp led by Henry Wallace and the Southern segregationist faction led by Strom Thurmond. The Southern Democratic bloc,

¹⁵ Black, A. & Hopkins, J. (2003). The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers. Dwight Eisenhower. *Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site*. Retrieved from <http://www.nps.gov/archive/elro/glossary/eisenhower-dwight.htm>

critical to the once mighty Roosevelt electoral coalition, was breaking away from the party. Maisel and Buckley wrote that “the prominent issues of the 1960s – civil rights and the Vietnam war – further drove the wedge in the Democratic Party between conservative Southerners and their more liberal copartisans in the North” (Maisel, Buckley, 2004, pg. 52). In fact, the Democratic Party was actually split into three different factions. The liberal wing of the party, which consisted of the intellectual elite, opposed the war, while the so called “blue-collar” wing ended up supporting it, considering the fact that “their sons, for the most part, being the ones fighting in the conflict” (Maisel, Buckley, 2004, pg. 53). The third wing of the party, which represented the conservative South, was peeling off on the civil rights issues.

According to V.O. Key, the electoral realignment that was clearly taking place in the 1960s was somewhat different in nature, if compared to the previous ones. Key dubbed it as “secular” in nature, as it started roughly in 1948 and spanned for over two decades (Key, 1959, 198-210). With the divided Democratic Party, a conservative tide in the South, West coast, the Mountain states and in rest of the country’s suburbia took place and led to the election of the Republican Richard Nixon as the President in the 1968.

The critical election in 1968 signaled the beginning of the six party system, which lasted roughly until the end of 2004. During this 36 year period, Southern States on the political level continued their transition from being once solidly Democratic to being firmly behind the Republican Party, which was one of the primary reasons behind Republicans winning in 7 out of 10 presidential elections. Although during that period the Democrats technically controlled the House of Representatives exclusively from 1968-1994, and had control of the Senate for many of those years as well, most of the Southern Democrats voted

with the GOP on a great number of bills, especially those concerning social issues. This was especially evident during the Republican administration of Ronald Reagan, when for all intents and purposes the GOP held a governing majority, by relying on the conservative Democrats to deliver on Reagan's agenda. Following the Democrat Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential victory, the 1994 Republican Revolution and the so called "Contract for America" allowed the GOP to recapture the House of Representatives for the first time in forty years and regain its majority in the Senate. By the mid 1990s, Southern Representatives and Senators essentially became the base of the Republican Party in Congress. "Republican strength in state legislatures throughout the South reached new post-Reconstruction peaks" (Maisel, Buckley, 2004, pg. 54).

This pattern continued in the first two elections of the new millennium, when it arguably reached its peak. In 2002 midterms, with help from the congressional redistricting, the Republican Party expanded its ranks in the House. Their Southern Republican majority by that time reached three-fifths of the total number of seats from the South (Black, Black, 2008, pg. 193). Furthermore, the GOP was also victorious in 60 percent of the congressional districts in the Midwestern states. It was, according to Earl and Merle Black, the strongest performance by the Republicans in that area of the country since the early 1950s (Black, Black, 2008, pg. 195). In 2004 elections, the GOP expended its majorities in the House and in the Senate even more, in addition to having Republican George W. Bush reelected for his second term as the President.

The Republican Party in the aftermath of the 2004 elections looked almost invincible to some observers and there was a talk inside the Washington political circles of the

Permanent Republican Majority.¹⁶ Yet, what appeared to have doomed the Democratic Party in the 1960s and for the next three plus decades – the Vietnam war – seems to have the same effect on the GOP as the second Gulf war (2003-present) has badly undermined their electoral majority. The unpopularity of the conflict in Iraq, coupled with the corruption charges within the GOP, as well as a slowdown in the economy propelled the Democrats out of the political basement in the 2006 mid-term elections, when they regained control of both the House and the Senate. Just two years later, in 2008, the voters elected Democrat Barack Obama as the first African-American as the President of the U.S. history - only the 3rd Democratic President since the 1968 elections, as well as the highest total vote getter in terms of the overall popular vote percentage. It appears that the last two elections might have signaled the end of the Republican dominated Sixth Party System and the beginning of what might be the Seventh Party System.

Throughout this chapter, I have demonstrated historical evidence of realignments and their consistent periodic occurrence of every three to four decades. I showed how each realignment period was highlighted with a critical election, which in turn signaled a beginning of a distinct new era within the American political system. The hypothesis that I will explore in the next chapters of this thesis is the probability that a realignment period took place sometime between 2005-2008, with the 2008 elections being critical in terms of culminating electoral realignment and signaling the beginning of a new party system.

¹⁶Kohut, A., & Doherty, C. (19 August, 2007). Permanent Republican Majority? Think Again. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/08/17/AR2007081701713.html>

CHAPTER 3

THE FIRST MOTOR

Mayhew, via Burnham, identified the First Motor claim as a dynamic tension buildup or force which causes the political pendulum to oscillate in and out of the thirty-year-or-so realignment cycles, as one of the main features of the realignment theory (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 17). Burnham contended that following a realignment, socio-economic forces cause political stress or tensions to build up until they escalate to a so called “boiling point”, at which time a new realignment is triggered. In other words, a so called pendulum, which swings from one way to another on the political spectrum, reaches its highest point with the help of realignment forces, which are accelerated by some monumental or epic events, such as war or deep economic recession, that take place in the society. The peak of the swing is represented by a critical election, during which electoral changes occur, forcing the policies of the government to change, which in turn cause the political pendulum to reverse the direction and swing the other way. The reverse oscillation is fueled by the effects of the new governmental policies and it lasts for another thirty or so years later. Eventually, the forces of change cause the pendulum it to reach the peak on the opposite side of the swing and then the process repeats itself only this time in the opposite direction.

Looking back at the history of realignments, the economic collapse in the year of 1929 which turned into the Great Depression is an example of one of those monumental or epic events which fueled the forces of change and which affected the American economy for

many years. The wave with which the Democratic Party took control of the Congress in 1930 elections as well the overwhelming victory by FDR in 1932 was directly related to failed economic policies which began in the late 1890s and ended with the administration of President Herbert Hoover. The Great Depression was the accelerant that essentially caused the political oscillator to reach its peak in 1932, when a critical election took place. The direction of the country was essentially reversed by the new economic policies of the Democrats, which lasted for the next 36 years. Three decades later, the war in Vietnam was escalating, and racial tensions throughout the country were on the rise, fueled by the violent protests and demonstrations. The economic policies of the FDR administration lost their popularity, especially among the Southern whites and newly affluent homeowners whose taxation levels consistently rose under the policies of the Democratic "Great Society". These issues effectively reversed the leftward direction of the "political oscillator" and caused it to go rightward once again, accompanied by the 1968 election of Nixon.

Fast forwarding some thirty six years, the aftermath of the 2004 presidential and congressional elections look similar to the elections of 1928 and 1964. The incumbent party won the Presidency and the control of the Congress yet again in these elections. However, signs of trouble for the ruling party were already visible in 2004, similar to the other pre-realignment elections of 1928 and 1964. In 2004, a variety of tracking polls showed that since approximately April of 2003, the majority of the population thought that the U.S. was heading in the wrong direction. In the lead-up to the 2004 elections, only 39% of people were satisfied with the direction of the country, according to the Newsweek poll.¹⁷ A similar

¹⁷ Polling Report Inc. (2009). *Direction of the Country: Right Track / Wrong Track*. Retrieved from <http://www.pollingreport.com/right.htm>

survey conducted by Pew Research Center, found just 36% satisfied while 58% of people dissatisfied with how things were in the country at that time.¹⁸ An exit poll conducted by CNN during the election day in 2004 showed only 49% of the surveyed thought the country was on the right track. Additionally, the survey showed that out of 20% of the voting public who thought Economy/Jobs was the most important issue of the elections, 80% of them voted for Democratic candidate John Kerry. Additionally, for those 15% of the people who mentioned Iraq war as their primary concern, 73% of them voted for the Democrat.¹⁹ In the end, the Republican George W. Bush was re-elected with one of the smallest electoral and popular vote margins of the incumbents in history of the U.S. elections. His rather slim 286 to 251 victory in Electoral College and 50.7% to 48.3% in popular vote over the John Kerry rivaled only Woodrow Wilson's thin margin, in his 1916 re-election.

In the aftermath of the 2004 vote, an ABC News/Washington Post poll showed another troubling sign for the GOP. The survey was tracking the following question: "Overall, which party - the Democrats or the Republicans - do you trust to do a better job in coping with the main problems the nation faces over the next few years?"²⁰ In the period from January 2002 through August 2003 the trend favored the Republicans by an average of just 5%. Starting from the June 2005 survey, however, the poll showed growing trends that favored the Democrats. In fact, the poll showed that in the lead-up to the 2006 elections, the Democrats were preferred by an average of 48.5% of those polled, while Republicans were favored by only 38.1%.

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ CNN. (2004). *Election Results: U.S. President / National / Exit Poll*. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/states/US/P/00/epolls.0.html>

²⁰ Polling Report Inc. (2009). *Major Institutions: Political Parties*. Retrieved from <http://www.pollingreport.com/institut2.htm>

In the buildup to the 2006 mid-term elections, the Newsweek survey conducted in October of that year, found only 31% of the people were satisfied with the overall direction of the country, while 61% were dissatisfied. The October 2006 Pew poll showed similar dynamics, with only 30% of those responded thought the country was headed in the right direction and 63% thought the opposite.²¹ Those numbers went up a bit in the CNN exit-poll survey for 2006 elections, with 41% of the respondents saying that country was on the right track, compared to 55% saying the country was on the wrong track. The same poll showed that some 50% of the people thought that economy was either not good or poor. The issue of the Iraq war dominated that election, with some 88% of people in the survey thinking of it as either somewhat, very or extremely important. Furthermore, 56% disapproved of the war, 55% thought that U.S. should withdraw some or all fighting troops from that region and 59% of the people thought that Iraq war did not improve the security of this country.²² A historical comparison conducted by Gallup also found that “it took longer for a majority of Americans to view the Vietnam war as a mistake than has been the case for Iraq” (Joyner, 2005).

Lastly, with several ethics-related scandals associated with bribery of public officials by powerful Washington lobbyists and allegations of fraud hanging over many Republicans in general and some of its more powerful members in Congress, the issue of corruption became one of the centerpieces of the 2006 election campaign. With Republicans Randy “Duke” Cunningham of California being convicted of bribery and Robert Ney of Ohio convicted of fraud, as well as various implications of House Majority Leader Tom Delay of

²¹ Polling Report Inc. (2009). *Direction of the Country: Right Track / Wrong Track*. Retrieved from <http://www.pollingreport.com/right.htm>

²² CNN. (2006). *America Votes 2006. Exit Polls: U.S. House of Representatives / National / Exit Poll*. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2006/pages/results/states/US/H/00/epolls.0.html>

Texas and Senator Conrad Burns of Montana among others with the disgraced and convicted lobbyist Jack Abramoff, corruption became an election year issue for the Republicans that helped them to lose control of the Congress and tip the political scale towards the Democrats in the aftermath of the 2006 mid-terms. A CBS News poll which was taken a week before the elections showed that 35% of those asked believed that the Republicans had more corrupt politicians than the Democrats, while 15% answered that the Democrats are more corrupt.²³ A CNN exit poll of the 2006 elections showed that 78% of the people thought corruption was either very important or extremely important. Of those people, an overwhelming majority voted for the Democrats for Congress.²⁴

The above mentioned synopsis of public opinion polls and other empirical indicators, in the aftermath of the 2004 general elections, shows that the electorate was becoming increasingly unhappy with the Republican Party, its policies and subsequently the overall direction of the country. The unwillingness of the Republican majority to acknowledge and in some ways to adhere to the electorate's opinion on hot button issues such as the war in Iraq, directly led to the rapid increase in political tension between the electorate and the governing party. The growing tension and the unhappiness of the voters led to the first wave of changes that translated into the Republican losses in the 2006 congressional elections, during which the GOP lost its legislative majorities in Congress.

²³ Polling Report Inc. (2009). *Government and Politics*. Retrieved from <http://www.pollingreport.com/politics.htm>

²⁴ CNN. (2006). *America Votes 2006. Exit Polls: U.S. House of Representatives / National / Exit Poll*. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2006/pages/results/states/US/H/00/epolls.0.html>

In 2007, the newly elected Democratic majorities in the House and in the Senate²⁵ were small in sheer numbers and therefore were unable to deliver on many of their campaign promises, mostly because of parliamentary tactics employed by the Republicans and vetoes (or threats thereof) from President Bush. However, Brian Knowlton, of the New York Times, pointed out that a even by simply proposing legislation which was favorable to the electorate, even if it was bound to fail, actually served a purpose from the Democrats' standpoint. By doing that, Knowlton wrote, the Democrats kept pressure on Republicans "while helping the Democrats show their supporters "why they can't get this done." ²⁶

The issue of the war in Iraq continued to be a major topic of public policy discussion throughout 2007 and by the end of that year, a majority of the Americans favored some sort of a timetable for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq. A Gallup poll showed that "59% of Americans say it is better for the United States to set a timetable for removing troops from Iraq and to stick to that timetable regardless of what is going on in Iraq at that time."²⁷ Situation in Iraq remained the most important topic for the electorate leading up to the 2008 primaries, where clear differences on that issue were evident during publicly televised presidential debates. With all Democratic candidates admitting in some form or fashion that the war was a mistake, most of the Republican candidates, with the exception of Congressman Ron Paul from Texas, considered the war itself as the one that needed to be

²⁵ This chamber was actually split 49-49. The Democratic majority in the Senate was made possible by two independents Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut caucusing with the Democrats.

²⁶ Knowlton, B. (18 July, 2007). Senate Republicans again block vote on Iraq pullout. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/18/world/americas/18iht-cong.4.6718722.html>

²⁷ Caroll, J. (11 December, 2007). Public Continues to Favor Timetable for Iraq Withdrawal. *Gallup*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/103159/Public-Continues-Favor-Timetable-Iraq-Withdrawal.aspx>

waged and faulted President Bush and his administration for the bad execution of it.²⁸ With the differences between the parties continued to grow on this subject as the time went on, the political tension continued to rise. Countless number of anti-war protests took place in 2007 and 2008 in Washington D.C and throughout the country. With escalating tensions, some of those protests actually turned out to be violent. In Olympia, Washington, for instance, it was reported that normally laid-back town was on edge in the middle of November of 2007. “after a week of raucous war protests that have resulted in dozens of arrests, broken windows and police firing pepper-spray projectiles to control restive crowds.”²⁹

Having said that, the Iraq conflict was not the only issue indicating a buildup of political tension during this time, however. As the first presidential primaries of 2008 approached, the continuing conflict in the Persian region slowly lost its top spot in the minds of the voters. In one of the polls taken in November of 2007, both “Democratic and Republican voters from early primary states identified health care as the top issue they want to hear about from presidential candidates during the 2008 election campaign.” In that survey, the issue of health care “eclipses other important national priorities such as Iraq, illegal immigration, the economy and terrorism/security issues, according to voters from Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina and Nevada.”³⁰ With state primaries now in full swing, the Gallup

²⁸ Greene, D. (4 June, 2007). Democratic Presidential Debate Targets Iraq War. *National Public Radio*. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=10693491>; CNN. (5 June, 2007). *CNN Live Event/Special: Republican Presidential Debate*. Retrieved from <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0706/05/se.01.html>

²⁹ Garber, A. & Thomas, R. (15 November, 2007). Tension in Olympia as war protests escalate. *The Seattle Times*. Retrieved from http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/localnews/2004015038_protests15m.html

³⁰ PRNewswire. (6 November, 2007). *Health Care Tops Issues Voters in Early Primary States Want 2008 Presidential Candidates to Address. Bio-Medicine*. Retrieved from <http://www.bio-medicine.org/medicine-news-1/Health-Care-Tops-Issues-Voters-in-Early-Primary-States-Want-2008-Presidential-Candidates-to-Address-5662-1/>

poll conducted in the middle of February indicated that “the percentage of Americans mentioning “the economy” as the most important problem facing the country has sharply increased since early January. Now, for the first time since March 2004, the Iraq war is not the No. 1 problem.” The findings of the survey showed that some “34% of Americans mentioning “the economy” in general terms as the most important problem facing the country. That is nearly double the 18% who said this in January, and is the highest Gallup has measured since another 34% reading in February 2003. The last time a higher percentage of Americans gave this response was at the tail end of the first Bush presidency in December 1992 and January 1993.”³¹ As the primary season progressed towards its conclusion, the issue of economy continued to be on top of the polling charts. In a survey conducted by ABC News/Washington from May 8-11 of 2008³², some 36% of the polled answered economy as their primary concern of the upcoming elections. The same poll also showed that Iraq was still very much on people’s minds, with 21% of those asked mentioning it as their top priority.

Throughout primaries, and despite contentious inter-party battle among the Democrats, the electorate, in polls after polls, expressed its disapproval in Republican administration’s handling of the economy. Furthermore, these surveys also showed that voters trusted Democrats more than Republicans on handling of the Economy. For instance, the results of the April 2008 Washington Post / ABC News Poll, showed that just 28 percent of the public approved of the way the Republican administration of President Bush was

³¹ Jones, J. M. (20 February, 2008). Economy Surpasses Iraq as Most Important Problem: First time in four years Iraq is not No. 1. *Gallup*. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/104464/Economy-Surpasses-Iraq-Most-Important-Problem.aspx>

³² Polling Report Inc. (2009). *Problems and Priorities*. Retrieved from <http://www.pollingreport.com/prioriti.htm>

handling the economy, while 70 percent disapproved.³³ In the aftermath of the presidential primaries, the voters continued to display their dissatisfaction with the current conditions in the country and their distrust in the Republican Party when it came to major policy issues. In sampling early summer polls, it was found that voters showed substantial preference towards the Democrats on the major issues of economy, health care and Iraq. In a Diageo/Hotline poll where people were asked "Which political party - the Democrats or the Republicans - do you think would do the best job handling?"³⁴, the Democrats in general were favored by 54% to 24% on the issue of health care, 54% to 28% on the issue of economy and 46% to 34% on the issue of Iraq. What's more, June 2008 Bloomberg / Los Angeles Times poll also found that "The Obama voters are much more energized and motivated to come out to vote than the McCain voters; McCain is still struggling to win over some of his core groups,...The good news for Obama is also that he seems to be doing better on the issue that is uppermost in voters' minds, and that is the economy."³⁵

Aside from the their statistical leads over Republicans on the most important issues facing the country, the Democrats enjoyed enormous advantages when it came to the overall voter excitement and campaign participation. For example, in July 2008 study conducted by the National Conference on Citizenship organization, it was found that "32% of Democrats stated that the 2008 campaign was "exciting," as compared to 9% of Republicans and 14% of

³³ Cohen, J. (15 April, 2008). On the Economy, 70% Disapprove of Bush. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/14/AR2008041402842.html>

³⁴ Polling Report Inc. (2009). *Problems and Priorities*. Retrieved from <http://www.pollingreport.com/prioriti.htm>

³⁵ Przybyla, H. (25 June, 2008). Obama Has 15-Point Lead as Voters Reject Republicans. *Bloomberg*. Retrieved from <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=washingtontory&sid=agCTbSDJ83rc>

Independents.”³⁶ The study also revealed that overall, “large numbers of campaign contributors and large crowds at political rallies in 2008, combined with the comparatively high rates of participation found in our survey, suggest that this is a remarkably participatory election... In short, many Americans are engaged right now - talking and thinking about issues and personally taking action.”³⁷ In another July 2008 survey, conducted by USA Today / Gallup, the results revealed that there was a big ‘Enthusiasm’ gap between the Democrats and the Republicans. The poll showed that some 67 percent of Obama's supporters were “more excited than usual about voting” for their candidate, whereas just 31 percent of McCain's supporters said they were excited more than usual.³⁸

In late summer and early fall, the Democrats continued to enjoy the advantage on the most important issues concerning the electorate. In a poll compiled by Rasmussen Reports, the generic congressional Democratic candidates were favored over generic congressional Republican candidates on most of the issues.³⁹ With a month before the elections, the October 2008 Rasmussen poll⁴⁰ showed Congressional Democrats being trusted with all the issues asked in the survey, including 51-38% with regards on economy, 54%-34% on healthcare, 53%-34% on education and even the former Republican strong points including handling of Iraq war – 47%-42% and national security – 47%-44%. On the presidential race side, the approval ratings for the Democrat Obama looked similar to his colleagues in the Senate, and

³⁶ National Conference on Citizenship. (July, 2008). *The 2008 Campaign Is A Civic Opportunity: Who is Excited*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncoc.net/index.php?tray=content&tid=top0&cid=206>

³⁷ Ibid, <http://www.ncoc.net/index.php?tray=content&tid=top0&cid=205>

³⁸ Mann, J. (21 July 2008). 'Enthusiasm gap' runs for Obama. *CNN*. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/07/18/enthusiasm/index.html>

³⁹ Rasmussen Reports. (2008). *Trust & Importance on Issues: August 2008*. Retrieved from http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/issues2/trust_importance_on_issues_august_2008

⁴⁰ Rasmussen Reports. (2008). *Trust & Importance on Issues*. Retrieved from http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/issues2/trust_importance_on_issues

the same could be said for the Republican McCain. In the aftermath of the collapse of the global financial markets and McCain's rather poor job of handling it, the CNN poll showed 53%-39% lead for the Obama on the issues of managing of the financial crisis. The lead was even bigger for the Democrats on the issues of handling of the economy - +16% and the healthcare - +20%.⁴¹ Additionally, alongside the growing lead for Democratic on the most important issues facing the country, the polls continued to show growing Enthusiasm gap. In one of those surveys, conducted by Gallup in October of 2008, results revealed that "only 51% of Republicans say they are more enthusiastic about voting than in previous years, compared to 71% of Democrats, marking a shift from October 2004, when enthusiasm was about the same for both partisan groups."⁴²

With just a few weeks before the general elections, journalistic reports continued to show growing excitement and buildup to what appeared to be a historic in nature election. Lester Holt, of the NBC News, for instance reported that "the long lines outside early voting locations around the country are a testament to the excitement and passion this election has generated." Dan Balz, of the Washington Post, summarized the upcoming 2008 Election Day as among the most anticipated as any in American history. He wrote that "Campaign 2008 has been the longest and costliest in U.S. history, but it has been much more than just that. As it comes to an end, it's safe to say we might not see one like this again."⁴³ He went on to say that the campaign arguably set records for intensity and involvement, as the electorate was as

⁴¹ Polling Report Inc. (2008). *Campaign 2008*. Retrieved from <http://www.pollingreport.com/wh08.htm>

⁴² Newport, F. (13 October, 2008). Democrats' Election Enthusiasm Far Outweighs Republicans'. *Gallup*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/111115/Democrats-Election-Enthusiasm-far-Outweighs-Republicans.aspx>

⁴³ Balz, D. (4 November, 2008). At the End of an Extraordinary Ride. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from http://voices.washingtonpost.com/44/2008/11/04/at_the_end_of_an_extraordinary.html

engaged with the political process as ever. Balz attributed long lines at early voting location as a sign “of an electorate concerned about the problems the country faces but eager to be part of shaping whatever comes next. Young voters have played an important role. Enthusiasm among African American voters has been at historic levels.” He concluded his analysis by saying that come November 4th, 2008, “Americans will begin writing the next great chapter in the story of the nation. They will also put a final exclamation point on this remarkable campaign, and everyone might miss it when it's gone. As Obama put it, whatever happens, it's been extraordinary.”

The election night culminated months and years of building tension within the electorate. The countless news accounts of raw emotions displayed by voters, on both side of the political aisle, proved that the 2008 elections were more than just typical once every four years political occurrence. Los Angeles Times editorial described voters' reactions on Obama's victory as “complex and varied as America itself: elation, shock, doubt, wonder and some hard feelings.”⁴⁴ Carla Marinucci, of San Francisco Chronicle, described the celebration scene in Grant Park in Chicago as one where myriad of emotions were at play. She noted that the location of the Obama's victory address to the nation was historic in its own right as forty years ago, the site was scene of the 1968 Democratic convention, when “crowds of bloodied young anti-war protesters clashed with cops at Grant Park to the nation's horror, chanting, “The whole world is watching!”⁴⁵ She remarked that four decades later, “crowds of young voters gathered here peacefully, this time to witness an event that, again, the whole world was

⁴⁴ Los Angeles Times. (6 November, 2008). *Elation, doubts on the day after*. Retrieved from <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/nov/06/nation/na-voices6>

⁴⁵ Marinucci, C. (5 November, 2008). Chicago's Grant Park epicenter on historic day. *The San Francisco Chronicle*. Retrieved from <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2008/11/05/MNKO13T64T.DTL>

watching. The news of Obama's win sent the throngs into waves of joy, embracing and song.”⁴⁶

In retrospect, the information that was presented in this chapter showed that enormous amount of the political tension was present leading up to the 2008 elections. Decades of arguably failing Republican policies, compounded by two wars, rapidly collapsing economy and the historical nature of Obama's campaign culminated into one of the most important events in the American history. In many ways, the “First Motor” claim for this electoral cycle mirrored and combined the features of the previous realignment periods, especially from 1929-32 and 1965-68, when economic conditions and the escalating war contributed to the electoral realignment.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

THE SECOND MOTOR

V.O. Key first noted potential linkage between realignments and long term voter allegiances to political parties in his 1952 work, when he wrote that “So cohesive were the bonds of party [after the Civil War] that for sixty years the country was ‘normally’ Republican...It remained for a second catastrophe, the Great Depression, to produce a major alternation in the pattern of partisan division within the voting population” (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 68). Sundquist also found that realignments featured long term or durable shifts in the distribution of basic attachments to the political parties. However, he noted that in almost every election, some minor shifts in the electorate, even the ones that are long term, can be observed. That is why Sundquist, along with other scholars, later qualified the original definition to include notions of ‘major’ and ‘measurable’, in conjunction with long term shifts in party identification that take place within the electorate during realignments (Sundquist, 1983, pg. 7). In the end, Sundquist defined relationship between party identification (support) and realignment as the one that “reflects a change in the structure of the party conflict and hence the establishment of a new line of partisan cleavage on a different axis within the electorate” (Sundquist, 1983, pg. 14).

From the standpoint of theory, it is important to point out that Party Identification numbers do not necessarily represent a full picture of support for one political party or another. Prior to the realignment in the 1960s, Party ID numbers were much easier to

interpret because majority of the electorate voted consistently down the party line during presidential and congressional elections. Meaning, the electorate supported and voted for the presidential and congressional candidates from the same party. Therefore, if during the New Deal era the vast majority of the country identified itself with Democrats, that statistic represented a general mood of the majority of the electorate - when Democrats were favored to the Republicans. However, Stonecash showed that beginning with the 1948 Dixiecrat rebellion, voters, especially in the South began to split their support, when they voted for the Dixiecrat and later Republican candidates for president, but continued voting for Democratic congressional candidates (Stonecash, 2006, pg. 1) Thus, if these 'split-ticket' voters were polled, they might have identified themselves as Democrats, but in fact they were probably leaning more towards Republicans. For that reason, when it comes to testing for realignments, it important to identify substantial swings in statistics when it comes to support for one party or another, as oppose to slight variations in that category.

If we were to look at Party ID trends spanning five decades – from the 1950s to 2000s, some conclusions can be made in relation to the realignment which occurred in the late 1960s after which the political pendulum swung towards conservatism. According to Stonecash, in the 1950s, the Democrats enjoyed a 48.1% to 29.8% lead over the Republicans when it came to party ID. By the 1960s, the party ID advantaged for the Democrats was even bigger – 57.1% to 35.1%, which included the leaners - independent voters who lean towards one political party or another (Stonecash, 2006, pg. 111).

However, the realignment in the mid to late 1960s was associated with several trends that were visible with changing party ID numbers. The percentage of independent voters grew from 7.2% in the 1950s to 13.5% in the 1970s. What's more, the number of those

identifying themselves as Democrats shrunk from 48.9% to 40.5% - which represented the biggest decline in party ID representation in five decades (from 1950s-2000s). The number of voters who identified themselves as Democrats continued to decline all the way until the 2000s, with the overall percentage of Democratic Party ID dropping all the way down to 34.5%. While the decline of Democratic Party ID in five decades was 13.6%, the Republicans fared much better in category, as their core support declined by only 1.2% and stood at 28.6% (Stonecash, 2006). What's more, the number of those leaning towards the Republican Party almost doubled in the span of fifty years, from 6.7% to 13%. In the end, according to Stonecash, what used to be a sizable 22% lead for the Democrats over the Republicans in Party ID in the 1950s, shrunk to only 7.3% in the 2000s. In polls, which conducted by the New York Times in cooperation with CBS News⁴⁷, Stonecash's observations can be verified. As we can see from multiple graphs in Figure 4.1 in Appendix 1A, from 1976 to the early 2000s, the Democrats' Party ID lead had shrunk from about +20% to just a few percentage points. The Democrats lost the most support from White voters and those from the South.

Gallup, which has also conducted Party ID polls since 1980s, has achieved results comparable to that of the New York Times / CBS News and Stonecash. In the chart presented in Figure 4.2 as seen below, we can see that the Republicans had gained percentage wise in Party ID from 1999 to 2004, with them taking a 32% to 31% lead in 2003.

⁴⁷Connelly, M. (28 February, 2009). Ailing G.O.P. Risks Losing a Generation. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/01/weekinreview/01connelly.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=connelly%200301&st=cse

Party Identification Yearly Averages, Gallup Polls, 1988-2008

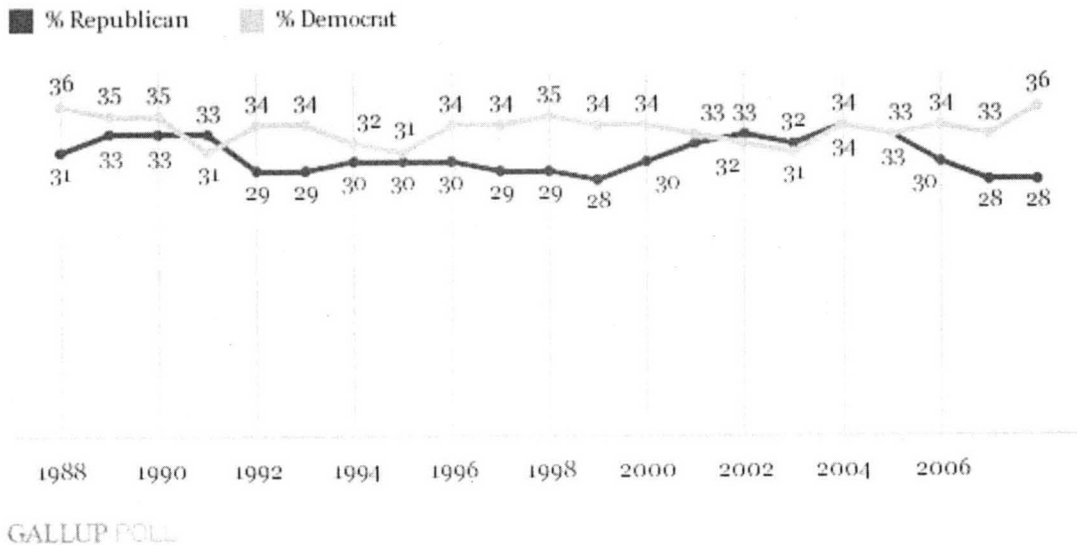


Figure 4.2 Party Identification Yearly Averages, Gallup Polls, 1988-2008. Source: Jones, J. M. (23 January, 2009). Democrats' 2008 Advantage in Party ID Largest Since '83. *Gallup*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/113947/Democrats-2008-Advantage-Party-Largest.aspx>

Furthermore, as seen in Table 4.1 in Appendix 2A, from 1993 to 2002, the Republicans gained in Party ID within 41 states, with the biggest gain in Utah, at +25%.⁴⁸ Overall, by 2002, the GOP had far more states where it led in Party ID by 20+ percent when compared to the Democrats⁴⁹, as seen in Figure 4.3 in Appendix 3A.

In summary, thus far the data show that after the 1960s realignment, the Democrats clearly lost support among the voters in three decades after the critical election of 1968. Their continuing, although rather slim, advantage against the Republicans in Party ID can be

⁴⁸ Jones, J. M. (7 January, 2003). Special Report: State-by-State Analysis Reveals Republican Shift. *Gallup*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/7543/Special-Report-StatebyState-Analysis-Reveals-Republican-Shift.aspx>

⁴⁹ Ibid.

possible explained by the split-ticket voting phenomenon. That is why the GOP won 7 out of 10 presidential contests, but the Democrats continued winning congressional majorities up until 1990s.

Since then, however, the preceding chart shows that in the span of just four years, the Republicans have lost 6 percentage points in Party ID and now are at their level of 1999 support. Additionally, in a 2005 Gallup survey where State-by-State Party ID was polled, as seen in Table 4.2. in Appendix 4A, the GOP had the advantage in only 15 states, with most of them being in the South – the Republican stronghold⁵⁰. In 2006, the Democrats have gained in Party ID even more, with them leading the Republicans in all but 7 states⁵¹, as shown in Table 4.3 in Appendix 5A. Overall, the 8% lead the Democrats have had in 2008 over the Republicans represented the largest margin within this Gallup survey. Moreover, in another Gallup poll conducted in the first quarter of 2009, the Democratic lead over the Republicans has grown to 13% (52%-29%) if leaners are included⁵², as seen in Figure 4.4 in Appendix 6A. Lastly, the Democratic lead in Party ID over the GOP within the various generational groups is quite sizable as of 2009⁵³, as presented in Figure 4.5 in Appendix 7A.

In conclusion, data show that from the mid 2000s there was a substantial reversal in the trend Party ID trend, with the Republicans losing much of the gains they had made in that

⁵⁰ Jones, J. M. (23 January, 2006). Special Report: Many States Shift Democratic During 2005. *Gallup*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/21004/Special-Report-Many-States-Shift-Democratic-During-2005.aspx>

⁵¹ Jones, J. M. (30 January, 2007). Democratic Edge in Partisanship in 2006 Evident at National, State Levels. *Gallup*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/26308/Democratic-Edge-Partisanship-2006-Evident-National-State-Levels.aspx>

⁵² Jones, J. M. (30 April, 2009). Democrats Maintain Seven-Point Advantage in Party ID. *Gallup*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/118084/Democrats-Maintain-Seven-Point-Advantage-Party.aspx>

⁵³ Newport, Frank. (8 May, 2009). Democrats Do Best Among Generation Y and Baby Boomers. *Gallup*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/118285/Democrats-Best-Among-Generation-Baby-Boomers.aspx?CSTS=alert>

particular category in the preceding three decades. From these charts we can see that by 2008, the Democrats enjoyed a +10% advantage in overall Party ID, they have a 5% lead over the Republicans among Men, +16% among Women, +14% among the 18-29 year olds, +3% among the Southerners and even a slight lead among White voters. The currently continuing trends also show that the Democrats are poised to gain even more in that particular category, thus bringing it close to the long term durability part of the Sundquist's theory. With that, based on the presented material in this chapter, is it fair to conclude that major and measurable changes in Party ID took place during the alleged realignment period between 2004-2008, thus confirming theoretical notion of Sundquist for the Second Motor claim of the realignment theory.

CHAPTER 5

VOTER TURNOUT

According to V.O. Key and Burnham, the concerns of the electorate and the subsequent voter turnout during realignments and critical elections are abnormally high. Election statistics for almost all critical elections of the 19th and 20th century have shown a pattern of increased voter participation during those significant junctures in the U.S. history. For instance, according to Mayhew and as shown in Figure 1B, the critical elections of 1860 and 1896 were one of the highest in their respective time period in terms of the voter turnout. During the Lincoln election of the 1860, some 81.2% of eligible voters cast their ballots, while 79.3% of the voters participated in 1896 elections (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 73). Although the 56.9% participation level for the 1932 elections was relatively low, the chart, in Figure 5.1 in Appendix 1B, shows that this statistic represented an end of a rather steep decline in the voter turnout trend that started right after 1896 elections. V.O. Key also pointed out that that the largest turnout increase came from the contingent of new voters, which in turn voted heavily for the FDR and the Democratic Congress. Key wrote that "the Democrats gained the allegiance of persons who had not been enough concerned with public affairs to vote and of persons coming to voting age" (Gamm, 1990, pg. 13). Key noted that the new Democratic coalition began to form as early as 1928, with many other new voters became electorally active in the 1930s. He also suggested that this new political force which consisted of industrial and urban workers, as well as immigrants, became in effect a steady base of "potential Democrats" (Gamm, 1990, pg. 13). Some thirty six years later, as seen in Figure

7B, the 60.8% voter turnout in the 1968 elections represented the highest watermark in terms of the turnout percentage for the next 40 years. In the 2008 elections, however, that 1968 number was finally trampled, with the latest reported voter turnout statistics showing it to be at 61.7%.⁵⁴ In other words, critical elections (including the critical election candidate of 2008) also posted significantly higher turnout levels than other elections around the same time.

Even before the 2008 elections took place, voter registration/participation levels were trending upwards, and in way that benefitted the Democrats. As reported by the United States Election Project (USEP)⁵⁵, between 2002 and 2004, there was a 7.4% increase in the voter registration numbers. Then, between the 2006 and 2008, voter registration numbers trended upwards again, which was primarily associated with the heightened interest in the 2008 presidential primaries. Overall, the numbers from the above-mentioned election project indicate that in 2008, there was a total increase of 5.4% in registration over 2004, from 177.4 million to 187.0 million registrants, also seen in Table 5.1 in Appendix 2B.

Furthermore, partisan affiliation numbers from the twenty-nine states that have voter registration by the political party, as displayed in Tables 5.2 and 5.3 in Appendixes 3B and 4B, suggest that “the national increase came primarily from Independents and Democrats. Among these twenty-nine states, the number of registrants identifying with the Democratic Party increased 10.8%, compared to 0.5% for Republicans and 12.0% for Independents” (United States Election Project, 2009). What’s more, it appears that the biggest increases took

⁵⁴ Reader should note that the discrepancy between the 2008 elections voter turnout numbers in Tables 5.4 and 5.5 in Appendixes 5B and 6B can be explained by the fact that the statistics in 6B were preliminary and thus less exact, as opposed to those used in Figure 5B, where they were computed using the latest turnout data.

⁵⁵ McDonald, M. (6 March, 2009). 2008 General Election Voter Registration Statistics. *United States Elections Project*. Retrieved from http://elections.gmu.edu/Registration_2008G.html

place in those states that were vital in determining the outcome of the Democratic Party presidential primaries, such as Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and North Carolina.

The increase in voter registration that clearly favored the Democrats during the 2008 primaries played itself out similarly during the general elections. As seen in Tables 5.4 and 5.5 in Appendixes 5B and 6B, and as explained on the USEP website, "The largest turnout rate increases from 2004 were experienced in states that shifted onto the battleground, such as Indiana, North Carolina, and Virginia. Other non-battleground Southern states such as Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina (and the District of Columbia) experienced turnout increases, perhaps a consequence of high turnout among African-Americans excited to vote for president-elect Obama. Turnout declines in deep red states such as Alaska and Utah may reflect less enthusiasm among Republicans for Sen. McCain."⁵⁶

A report released by American University's Center for the Study of the American Electorate (CSAE) confirmed the USEP findings, as well as explained the reasoning behind the rather modest increase in voter turnout of just 1.6% over 2004 elections, when by many estimates, the turnout was suppose to be a lot higher. According to CSAE, the small increase in overall voter participation can be largely attributed to the lower turnout among the Republican voters. The report stated that "the percentage of eligible citizens voting Republican declined to 28.7 percent down 1.3 percentage points from 2004. Democratic turnout increased by 2.6 percentage points from 28.7 percent of eligibles to 31.3 percent. It

⁵⁶ McDonald, M. (12 March, 2009). 2008 Unofficial Voter Turnout. *United States Elections Project*. Retrieved from http://elections.gmu.edu/preliminary_vote_2008.html

was the seventh straight increase in the Democratic share of the eligible vote since the party's share dropped to 22.7 percent of eligibles in 1980."⁵⁷

In terms of specific demographic groups, voter turnout statistics for the 2008 elections showed some mixed results. In one report conducted by the Census Bureau, data showed that 18 to 24 voters were the only age group to show a statistically significant increase in turnout, reaching 49 percent in 2008 compared with 47 percent in 2004."⁵⁸ Tom Edwards, an analyst for the U.S. Census Bureau, noted that among that particular group of the electorate, "African Americans had one the highest turnout rates – at 55 percent, which represented an 8 percent increase from 2004"⁵⁹ Overall, if compared with the election in 2000, the increase in youth voter turnout in 2008 was around 11 percent.⁶⁰ According to another study conducted by Pew Research Center, it was found that "nearly one-fourth of voters in last November's election were minorities, the most diverse election ever, fueled by high turnout from black women and a growing Hispanic population, an independent research group found."⁶¹ The study revealed that the increased participation among African Americans was highest in more than a decade, with 15.9 million casted ballots which represented 12.1 percent of the electorate. In comparison, the overall voting share of African Americans voters

⁵⁷ Gans, C., & Hussey, J. (6 November, 2008). Much-hyped Turnout Record Fails to Materialize. Convenience Voting Fails to Boost Balloting. *American University*. Retrieved from <http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2008/images/11/06/pdf.gansre08turnout.au.pdf>

⁵⁸ Edwards, T. (20 July 2009). Voter Turnout Increases by 5 Million in 2008 Presidential Election, U.S. Census Bureau Reports. Data Show Significant Increases Among Hispanic, Black and Young Voters. *U.S. Census Bureau*. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/voting/013995.html>

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement staff. (19 December 2008). *Young Voters in the 2008 Presidential Election*. Retrieved from http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/FactSheets/FS_08_exit_polls.pdf

⁶¹ Hope Y. (30 April 2009). Blacks match whites in voting rates in 2008. *Associated Press*. Retrieved from http://www.newsvine.com/_news/2009/04/30/2755812-blacks-match-whites-in-voting-rates-in-2008

previously declined to 11 percent in 2004 after their low turnout in George W. Bush's re-election. The report explained that the dramatic gains Hispanics made in their voting share can be attributed for the most part due to their fast growing population. In 2008 elections, roughly 9.7 million, or about half of the eligible Hispanics casted their ballots. That represented an overall total of about 7.4 percent of the total electorate - a jump from 6 percent in 2004.⁶²

Having said that, the historic by nature increase in turnout among certain demographic groups was offset by a rather stagnant participation and decreased turnout among other groups, in turn causing overall voter turnout increase to be rather modest in 2008 elections. In CSAE report it was pointed out that many election turnout prognosticators failed to realize that the excitement in re-electing their candidate which was present for the Republicans in 2004, was not there for them in 2008 and thus many mistakenly assumed that the GOP turnout would stay at the similar level as four years earlier. Curtis Gans, CSAE's director, stated that "we failed to realize that the registration increase was driven by Democratic and independent registration and that the long lines at the polls were mostly populated by Democrats."⁶³ In fact, the percentage of older white voters who participated in 2008 elections decreased as that group of the electorate showed lack of interest in backing either Barack Obama or John McCain.⁶⁴ Overall, at the time of the publication of the CSAE's report, of the 47 states and the District of Columbia, the turnout numbers increased in 22

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ Gans, C., & Hussey, J. (6 November, 2008). Much-hyped Turnout Record Fails to Materialize. Convenience Voting Fails to Boost Balloting. *American University*. Retrieved from <http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2008/images/11/06/pdf.gansre08turnout.au.pdf>

⁶⁴ Yen, H. (20 July, 2009). Voting rate dips in 2008 as older whites stay home. *The Seattle Times*. Retrieved from http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/politics/2009504295_apusvoterturnout.html

states and D.C, and even these numbers were depressed by the low turnout and the loss of voters within the GOP.

In summary, voter turnout statistics of the 2008 elections showed mixed results when tested for the Mayhew's realignment claim of sharp increase in participation during realignments. Although the rather modest growth in the voting participation of the whole electorate certainly did not match the original theoretical claim of V.O. Key and Burnham, these results need to be considered in a different context. The sharpest increase in participation in 2008 was witnessed among the fastest growing group of the electorate – the 18-29 voters and the ethnic minorities. The ability of Barack Obama's campaign to capture over two thirds of that electorate went a long way in helping him win the presidency. Of course it is important not to overlook the ways in which he captured those two voting blocs. He attracted them because in many ways he resembles them. His youthful appearance, ability of his campaign to communicate his message and get out to vote drive via new electronic media, such as Internet and Text Messaging, and etc., as well as his ethnic minority status and therefore his ability to relate to the issues of minorities went a long way in securing a great majority of votes from that portion of the electorate. From a historic perspective, the current alliance of the Democratic Party with a voting bloc of young voters and minorities resembles in many ways the 1932 alliance of the new voters FDR has assembled and which lasted for over three decades. Due to the recent statistics showing that by 2042, this country will become Minority-Majority in terms of its population⁶⁵, that fact bodes well for the

⁶⁵ Aizenman, N.C. (14 August, 2008). U.S. to Grow Grayer, More Diverse. Minorities Will Be Majority by 2042, Census Bureau Says. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/13/AR2008081303524.html>

Democratic Party and its future success, at least as things currently stands in terms of its support for the policies which are favored by these rapidly growing voting groups.

CHAPTER 6

TURMOIL DURING PARTY CONVENTIONS

The theoretical link between critical elections and the turmoil associated with the nomination process during each political party's conventions has to do with a potential situation where some deep factional divisions within a political party can lead to a possibility of either a temporary or a permanent collapse of the party's governing coalition and thus can lead to a loss in the following elections. The theory also alleges that these types of contentious conventions usually take place during preceding realigning periods and quite often in a year corresponding to critical elections. Mayhew wrote that according to Burnham, the intensity surrounding critical elections "typically spills over into the party nominating and platform-writing machinery during the upheaval and results in major shifts in convention behavior....Ordinarily accepted 'rules of the game' are flouted; the party's processes, instead of performing their usual integrative functions, themselves contribute to polarization" (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 21).

Prior history of critical elections shows that in 1824, as mentioned in chapter 2 of this thesis, the Democratic-Republican Party essentially splintered during the nomination process into four different parts, with John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson leading two biggest factions. After the split, Jackson's wing of the party formed a new political entity – the Democratic Party. In 1860, the Democratic Party broke up into two competing factions again

– northern and southern, with both groups nominating their own candidates for President (Mayhew, 2002, pg 75). The divide among the Democrats along the lines of slavery allowed the Republican Party and its candidate Abraham Lincoln to win the presidency, ushering in an electoral realignment. Furthermore, in 1896, as Mayhew pointed out, the clash among the Democrats over differences of Gold vs. Silver and how to treat them in the political platform splintered that party again, with over 160 party delegates refusing to vote for nomination of William Jennings Bryan (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 76). The interparty fight and the inability of the Democrats to come up with a cohesive party platform once again allowed the Republicans to win, this time in 1896, a classic realigning election.

The most recent example of turmoil during a party convention coinciding with a critical election was in 1968. In that year, the presidential nomination process for the candidates of the two major political parties was rather dramatic. Republican Richard Nixon, although not without a challenge from governors Ronald Reagan from California and Nelson Rockefeller from New York, got nominated as a GOP presidential candidate for the 1968 elections on the first ballot after he struck a deal with some of the more conservative state delegates from the south (Paulson, 2000, pg. 102-103). On the other hand, the Democratic Party convention turned out to be an utter disaster. Rioting between the police and the anti-war peace protesters in the host city of Chicago, “spilled into the Democratic convention, adding to a polarization that kept Eugene McCarthy, the losing candidate, from endorsing the winner, Hubert Humphrey, until late in the campaign” (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 76). The polarization inside the convention hallways and outside deeply divided the Democrats as the elections approached. Haynes Jones, in an article for Smithsonian magazine wrote that negative developments associated with the 1968 Democratic convention had “long-term

political consequences, it eclipsed any other such convention in American history, destroying faith in politicians, in the political system, in the country and in its institutions.”⁶⁶

Forty years later, the neck-and-neck race for the Democratic Party nomination for President between Senators Obama and Clinton prompted many predictions, especially from political pundits and some media outlets, about the possibility of the so called “floor fight” during the 2008 Democratic National Convention, which took place in late August in Denver. Justin Ewers, a columnist for U.S. News and World Report, wrote in the midst of the Democratic Party primaries, it was “becoming increasingly likely that, barring compromise, the party's Super Delegates -elected officials and party leaders who aren't bound by the choices of primary voters - will decide the winner. Not surprisingly, this has caused an epidemic of hand-wringing among political experts, who worry that this state of affairs is dangerously similar to 1968, when a furious battle within the Democratic Party over two popular candidates, Eugene McCarthy and Hubert Humphrey, spilled from the Democratic National Convention onto the streets of Chicago.”⁶⁷

As the race for the nomination progressed towards its conclusion, the rhetoric from both campaigns became more hostile towards each other. Racial undertones were heard on the campaign trail. A divide between various demographics within the Democratic electorate became clearly visible. Perhaps one the clearest examples indicative of these divisions was witnessed at the June 1st 2008 Democratic National Committee Rules and Bylaws meeting,

⁶⁶ Johnson, H. (August 2008). 1968 Democratic Convention. The Bosses Strike Back. *The Smithsonian*. Retrieved from <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/1968-democratic-convention.html>

⁶⁷ Ewers, J. (20 March, 2008). Clinton-Obama Delegate Fight: A Repeat of 1968 Convention? Some historians say the contest more closely resembles Kennedy-Stevenson in 1960. *U.S. News and World Report*. Retrieved from http://www.usnews.com/articles/news/campaign-2008/2008/03/20/are-the-democrats-playing-the-1968-convention-all-over-again_print.htm

where the fate of convention delegates from Michigan and Florida was being decided. With both states being denied voting representation at the convention for holding early primaries (against the Democratic Party's scheduling rules), Senator Clinton's wins in both states were essentially null and void. Her only chance to wrestle the nomination away from Senator Obama was to get a full number of delegates from those two states in her win column. When that request was denied, one of Clinton's supporters - Harriet Christian - stood up and uttered the following:⁶⁸

I'm proud to be an older American woman....

"The Democrats are throwing the election away. For what? An inadequate black male, who would not have been running had it not been a white woman that was running for president?

"And I'm not gonna shut my mouth anymore. I can be called white, but you can't be called black. That's not my America. It's equality for all of us. It's about time we all stood up for it.

"I'm no second class citizen, and God damn the Democrats....

"I came here for the vote of every American, and our Democratic Party threw us down the tubes. I was a second class citizen before, now I'm nothing. Why? Because they want to do what they want to do.

"And they think we won't turn and vote for McCain. Well, I got news for all of you: McCain will be the next president of the United States (Retter, 2008).

This particular quote perhaps serves as a best illustration of the remaining deep seated animosity that still remained within the Democratic Party after contentious primaries. Harriet

⁶⁸ Retter, D. (2 June, 2008). Campaign Worker's Rant is a Disgrace. *The New York Post*. Retrieved from http://www.nypost.com/seven/06022008/news/nationalnews/campaign_workers_rant_is_a_disg_race_113521.htm

Christian represented, in a way, a contingent of older, white Americans who were uncomfortable with Barack Obama's coalition of young and ethnic voters.

With the primary season about to end, it was clear that neither Obama nor Clinton would gain enough pledged convention delegates to win the Democratic nomination outright, although Senator Obama held a small but solid lead among those pledged delegates.⁶⁹ Mindful of the events of forty years ago, when the party leaders handpicked the presidential nominee and thus made the vote of the people in the 1968 primaries irrelevant, many leaders of the Democratic Party in 2008 wanted to make sure that the super delegates – i.e. party leaders, did not go against the will of the primary voters. Katherine Sibley, a professor at St. Joseph's University in Pennsylvania, told America.gov website that "there was a sense that the super delegates, if they had gone for Hillary Clinton over Barack Obama when the popular vote, even though it was close, was leaning the other way, would have really led to a sense of alienation," or even "added an element of illegitimacy" to Clinton's candidacy.⁷⁰

Fearing a potentially disastrous situation where a nomination fight on the "floor" of the convention could take place, the leaders of the Democratic Party released a statement urging any uncommitted super delegates to declare their choice for the party's nomination by

⁶⁹ Super Delegates – are representatives to the Democratic Party convention and who comprise nearly 40 percent of the number of delegates needed to clinch the Democratic nomination. Unlike regular convention delegates who are essentially selected by the voters during the Democratic Party primaries, Super Delegates are comprised by the Democratic Party elected officials such as governors and members of Congress, former presidents Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter, former vice president Al Gore, retired congressional leaders such as Dick Gephardt, and all Democratic National Committee members, some of whom are appointed by the party chairman. Source: Curry, Tom. (26 April, 2007). What role for Democratic 'super-delegates'? *MSNBC*. Retrieved from <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18277678/>.

⁷⁰ Kaufman, S. (4 August, 2008). Memories of 1968 Democratic Convention Resonate in 2008. Protest, alienation at Chicago meeting changed party's nomination process. *The U.S. Department of State*. Retrieved from <http://www.america.gov/st/usg-english/2008/August/20080804185251esnamfuak0.1775171.html>

the end of the primary season. In the same statement, Howard Dean, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and West Virginia Gov. Joe Manchin, chairman of the Democratic Governors Assn., also urged Hillary Clinton to officially drop out of the race after she refused to concede the defeat following the conclusion of the primaries, at which point Barack Obama had gained enough pledged and super delegates for the Democratic Party presidential nomination.⁷¹

With intense pressure mounting on her to concede the race, Senator Clinton did just that on June 7th, 2008 by officially suspending her campaign. However, she decided not to release her delegates to vote for Barack Obama, thereby leaving a slight opening for herself that if something were to happen to her Democratic opponent, she would be next in line for the nomination. That move, however, once again prompted many pundits in the media to speculate of the potential nomination fight during the convention. Further complicating issues for the Democrats who wanted to show a united front and have trouble-free convention in Denver, were several organizations, such as Recreate 68, whose purpose was to recreate anti-war demonstrations that took place forty years ago in Chicago. The fear of a repeat of violence prompted calls for increased law enforcement presence during the Democratic National Convention (DNC).⁷²

⁷¹ Malcolm, A. (4 June, 2008). Dean, Pelosi, Reid set Friday deadline for superdelegates' choices, move to force end to Clinton bid. *The Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/washington/2008/06/dean-pelosi-rei.html>

⁷² Kopel, D. (3 May, 2008). KOPEL: Barr, Limbaugh go too far. Radio hosts talk of riots in Denver. *The Rocky Mountain News*. Retrieved from <http://www.rockymountainnews.com/news/2008/may/03/kopel-barr-limbaugh-go-too-far/>; Sprengelmeyer, M.E. (11 August, 2008). Tom Hayden, Chicago 1968. The New Left leader from four decades ago thinks Denver should be skeptical of federal authorities' warnings about violent protest. *The Rocky Mountain News*. Retrieved from

When the DNC finally took place, the fears of the repeat of 1968 were never realized for the Democrats. Both Barack Obama and his vice-presidential pick Joe Biden were elected as their party nominees by acclamation⁷³, delegates from Florida and Michigan got full voting rights at the convention⁷⁴, the speeches by Bill⁷⁵ and Hillary⁷⁶ Clinton were well delivered and were greatly received by the viewing public and which helped sooth primary “battle wounds”.⁷⁷ Violence on the streets of Denver was almost non-existent. Although minor skirmishes took place between some demonstrators and the police, the overwhelming presence of the law enforcement officers prevented any possible escalations in violence.⁷⁸ Overall, the DNC of 2008 was perceived as successful in unifying the Democrats for the upcoming general election campaign.⁷⁹

On the Republican end, Arizona Senator John McCain had essentially wrapped up his nomination by late February of 2009, when most of his biggest rivals dropped out of the race. However, the GOP candidate still faced potential trouble at the convention if he were to choose a Vice-Presidential running mate who was pro-choice. As reported by Jan Crawford

<http://www.rockymountainnews.com/news/2008/aug/11/officials-pressing-the-panic-button-begets-says/>

⁷³ Huffington Post Editorial. (27 August, 2008). *Obama Nominated By Acclamation, Accepts Nomination*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/08/27/obama-nominated-by-acclam_n_121934.html

⁷⁴ Weisman, J. (24 August, 2008). Michigan and Florida Delegations Regain Full Convention Voting Rights. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from

http://voices.washingtonpost.com/44/2008/08/24/michigan_and_florida_delegatio.html

⁷⁵ Webb, J. (28 August, 2008). Bill Clinton hails Barack Obama. *BBC News*. Retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7584307.stm>

⁷⁶ Jones, J. M. (28 August, 2008) Hillary Clinton's Speech Well-Received. Gallup. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/109909/Hillary-Clintons-Speech-WellReceived.aspx>

⁷⁷ Cillizza, C. (28 August, 2008). Convention Cheat Sheet: Unity! *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <http://voices.washingtonpost.com/thefix/convention-cheat-sheet/convention-cheat-sheet-day-3.html>

⁷⁸ Litwin, M. (25 August, 2008). I went to a protest, and a festival broke out. *The Rocky Mountain News*. Retrieved from <http://www.rockymountainnews.com/news/2008/aug/25/protest-festival-litwin/>

⁷⁹ Springston, J. (31 August, 2008). Democrats Unify at Party's 2008 National Convention. *The Atlanta Progressive News*. Retrieved from <http://www.atlantaprogressivenews.com/news/0370.html>

Greenburg of ABC News, with a few days before the announcement of the VP pick, a revolt was brewing “among anti-abortion activists in his conservative base that could include a walkout at the Republican National Convention next week and a huge battle on the floor - especially if he selects former-Democrat-turned-Independent Joe Lieberman.”⁸⁰ The ABC reporter went on to say that aside from the possibility of a brawl on the convention floor, “major conservative donors who have planned to bankroll issue-oriented advertising and other grass-roots efforts directed at social conservatives are putting their work on hold and will withdraw financial support if McCain picks a running mate that is not strongly anti-abortion.” The same article quoted one conservative strategist who characterized the proposition of an abortion rights VP pick as a “disaster” for the Republican Party – “and said selecting Lieberman would cost McCain the election. It would enrage conservatives and prompt some Republicans to shift support to libertarian candidate Bob Barr.” McCain’s eventual pick of Alaska’s Governor Sarah Palin for the Vice-Presidential nominee essentially slammed the door to any potential delegate walkouts or convention floor fights. As reported by Mark Halperin of Time Magazine, the pick created excitement “among the kind of grass-roots conservatives who have never been enthusiastic about McCain, and in the media, which will be fascinated by Palin's good looks..., intelligence and charm.”⁸¹ In his later article describing Palin’s acceptance speech as VP nominee, “She rocked the hall (and likely the country) with a tough, conservative message, steely offense, glowing optimism, and

⁸⁰ Crawford-Greenburg, J. (28 August, 2008). McCain Risks Alienating Conservative Base With VP Choice. *ABC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.abcnews.go.com/print?id=5677195>

⁸¹ Halperin, M. (29 August, 2008). The Palin Pick: Bold or Disastrous? *TIME Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://www.time.com/time/politics/article/0,8599,1837514,00.html>

boundless charisma. The start of something truly big - or the best night of her candidacy.”⁸²

As was the case with the Democrats, the Republican Party showcased its unity and the excitement surrounding the selection of Sarah Palin almost completely overshadowed the recently concluded DNC.

In retrospect, both political parties avoided potential disasters that could have crippled the general election campaigns for the respective candidates. On the Democratic side, the primaries have exposed an undeniable conflict between the so called Old Guard and New Guard of the Democratic Party. The Old Guard, led by Senator Clinton, was mostly represented by the traditional or old fashion Democrats, who are white, more conservative and in some ways less diverse. The New Guard was represented by Senator Obama and his organized forces of youth, diversity and ethnicity. The interparty fight that Democrats have experienced represented more or less a generational fight and a transition between from the ways of the Old Guard to the New Guard, something that I will discuss more in detail in chapter 8 of this thesis. The conflict could have escalated if Senator Clinton chose to push her nomination case to the convention floor, thereby potentially triggering a point of no repair, and thus would present a difficult situation for either candidate to win in the general election.

On the opposite end of the political spectrum, the campaign for the ideological purity has already forced many of the more moderate Republicans, those more tolerant to Abortion and Gay marriage, to abandon the party. The GOP convention, which took place in St. Paul,

⁸² Halperin, M. (3 September, 2008). Scorecard: Second-Night Speeches. *TIME Magazine*. Retrieved from http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1838223_1838561_1838560,00.html

Minnesota, was one of the least diverse conventions in Republican history.⁸³ So in essence, the Republican Party, for all intent and purposes already had its own Civil War before the primaries and the convention took place, from the standpoint that its social and economic conservative policies led the party to shrink in its size to the point where it cannot become a majority governing coalition. Therefore, the relatively uneventful Republican primaries and convention signified that the ideological purification has been complete.

With that said, from the theoretical standpoint, Mayhew's notion (via Burnham) of party convention turmoil being a key harbinger of realignment in many ways realized itself, although perhaps not in the strictest theoretical sense. There was no repeat of 1968, when Democrats fought on the convention floor. That can be explained by the new party nomination and convention rules, especially on the Democratic side, which were specifically designed to avoid potential interparty fights in the future. Therefore conventions are now considered more or less as exhibitions, where party nominees are already chosen and most of the events taking place during the conventions are considered as formalities. However, it is undeniable that interparty changes that have been described in this chapter signify the essence of realignment, meaning the deep rooted changes within parties took place.

⁸³ Saslow, E., & Barnes, R. (4 September, 2008). In a More Diverse America, A Mostly White Convention. The Washington Post. Retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/09/03/AR2008090303962_pf.html.

CHAPTER 7

PERFORMANCE OF THIRD PARTIES

The basic concept behind the theoretical relationship between the performance(s) of the third parties and realignment is that “for one reason or another, good showings by third parties tend to stimulate, or at least to take place shortly before, realignments” (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 21). James L. Sundquist, a major contributor to this particular section of the realignment theory, conceptualized it by saying that the existing major political parties tend to straddle or become noncommittal on a big political issue, whatever it might be. The vague response on issues by political parties or particular politicians within those parties tends to happen for multiple reasons. Most of the time though, the elected officials, especially those who are fighting for their reelection, do not want to “upset” some of the bigger contributors, who tend to be affected one way or another by the big political issues that take place in Washington. The ambiguous appearance of politicians, in turn, forces radicals from one or both political spectrums to start advocating the organization of a new political party (or joining an existing third party) as a way of achieving the changes in policies they are seeking. These radicals tend to argue that “one major party is as bad as the other and both are hopeless as instruments of action. The established politicians continue to urge working through one or both existing parties. But if neither party embraces the issue and it continues to grow in power, sooner or later a third party is formed” (Sundquist, 1983, pg 313).

Burnham, for his part, distinguished two basic types of third-party activity within realignment theory. He characterized the first one as a major-party bolt, "which, organizationally and at the mass base, detaches the most acutely disaffected parts of a major party's coalition" (Burnham, 1970, pg. 27). For Burnham, this type of inter-party rebellion is more durable because the insurgent coalition in many instances plays a major role in the current party and then due to circumstances leaves it for good and joins the third party. The second type of a third-party activity is less durable and is more of a protest type of a movement, which, according to Burnham may have a broad appeal for a short time and is usually made up of a group of electorate that are "not prominent in either major party establishment, and which draws mass support cutting across pre-existing party lines" (Burnham, 1970, pg. 28). Additionally, Burnham theorized that these third-party movements often occur "as early as the midpoint of a "party system"... and figure as "protorealignment phenomena" in [the] model of tension buildup" (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 22).

The recent history of realigning periods shows that the relatively successful campaigns of Strom Thurmond in 1948 and George Wallace in 1968 represented a hybrid movement as it contained both types of the third party activity, per Burnham's theory. The rebellion of the Southern Democrats in the 1948 presidential elections, unhappy with their party over the Civil Rights movement, led to a situation when a majority of the Democratic electorate in that geographic region voted for a third party bid by Dixiecrat Thurmond. At the time, this protest vote was considered temporary as this particular group of voters came back into the Democratic fold for the presidential elections from 1952 through 1964. However, this temporary rebellion was actually a sign of things to come as this Southern Democratic electorate eventually bolted the national party (at least on the presidential level for the next

several decades) permanently. The critical election of 1968 represented a decisive point in American history as the Southern Democrats, who voted for the third party campaign of segregationist George Wallace in big numbers, with him capturing over 9.9 million in popular vote count and 46 electoral votes⁸⁴, eventually aligned themselves with the GOP, starting with the 1972 presidential elections.

More recently, three relatively successful third-party presidential runs have taken place in the last 16 years. In 1992, Ross Perot, ran as a fiscal conservative, strong on law-and-order, but also as socially liberal, believing in woman's right to choose, and a religious-right bashing candidate.⁸⁵ In that election, Perot was able to garner close to 20 million votes, which translated into almost 19% of the popular vote⁸⁶ – the highest numbers for the third-party candidate since the 1968 election. His party followers were mainly made up of moderate 18-44, middle-class voters, who were disaffected by both major political parties.⁸⁷ While still debatable within the Political Science community, but by many estimations, according to Peter W. Schramm, "the vast majority of those who voted for Ross Perot would have voted for the Republican nominee if Perot were not running. Although in public the Democratic Party claims to be worried about Perot, and their inability to woo Perot supporters, I believe that they privately acknowledge the fact that without Perot running in

⁸⁴ Leip, D. *Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections. 1968 Presidential General Election Results*. Retrieved from

<http://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/national.php?year=1968&f=0&off=0&elect=0>

⁸⁵ Holmes, S. A. (5 November, 1992). The 1992 Elections: Disappointment - News Analysis An Eccentric but No Joke; Perot's Strong Showing Raises Questions On What Might Have Been, and Might Be. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/11/05/us/1992-elections-disappointment-analysis-eccentric-but-no-joke-perot-s-strong.html>

⁸⁶ Leip, D. *Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections. 1992 Presidential General Election Results*. Retrieved from

<http://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/national.php?year=1992&f=0&off=0&elect=0>

⁸⁷ Spicer, D. E. (14 March, 1997). The Perot Vote. Kennedy School of Government, *Harvard University*. Retrieved from http://www.hks.harvard.edu/case/3pt/perot_vote.html

'92, Clinton would not be President.”⁸⁸ In subsequent mid-terms in 1994 and in presidential elections in 1996, a big number of the Perot voters started to migrate back to the GOP.⁸⁹ His vote totals in the 1996 presidential elections were less than half of what they were just four years before that.⁹⁰

While in the 1992 and 1996 elections, the third-party challenger Perot debatably played a spoiler role to the GOP and arguably cost them at least one of the two presidential elections, in the year 2000 that role was played by Ralph Nader of the Green Party, who harmed the Democrats.⁹¹ Although various analyses of that election offer several different explanations for George W. Bush's victory in the presidential race against Al Gore in 2000, one of the main ones still remains Ralph Nader's third-party campaign, especially in the battle-ground states of Florida and New Hampshire. In Florida, with the presidential election in that state decided by 537 votes, Herron and Lewis argued that out of the ninety two thousand plus votes the liberal candidate Nader received, in his absence, a sufficient number of his supporters would have voted for Gore and thus would have reversed the election outcome not only in Florida, but also for the entire nation. The same can be said about New

⁸⁸ Schramm, P. W. (July, 1993). Clinton, Perot, and Chaos. *Ashbrook Center for Public Affairs at Ashland University*. Retrieved from <http://www.ashbrook.org/publicat/onprin/v1n2/schramm.html>

⁸⁹ Luntz, F. (4 March, 2007). Fixing the GOP. Republicans must reach out to the 'fed-ups,' independents who hold the balance of political power. *The San Diego Union-Tribune*. http://www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20070304/news_mz1e4fixing.html

⁹⁰ Leip, D. Dave Leip's *Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections*. 1996 Presidential General Election Results. Retrieved from <http://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/national.php?year=1996&off=0&elect=0&f=0>

⁹¹ Herron, M. C., & Lewis, J. B. (24 April, 2006). *Did Ralph Nader Spoil a Gore Presidency? A Ballot-Level Study of Green and Reform Party Voters in the 2000 Presidential Election*. Retrieved from <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/lewis/pdf/greenreform9.pdf>

Hampshire, where Nader received over twenty two thousand votes in an election that was decided by a margin of less than eight thousand votes.⁹²

Despite the inferior performance of the third-party candidates in the 2000 presidential elections, if compared to the 1992 and 1996 elections, they still managed to get some 3.75% of the total popular vote which corresponded to roughly 4 million votes, with Ralph Nader getting almost 73% of that total. Four years later, however, the minor parties barely received 1% of the total number of casted votes throughout the whole country. Ralph Nader, received just a little over 463 thousand votes, which corresponded to 0.38% out of the overall number of total votes casted country-wide.

As the 2008 elections appeared on the political radar, a number of wild speculation arose about what kind of effect, if any, the third-parties would have in that year's presidential contest. As early as May, 2006, Chris Cillizza of the Washington Post raised the possibility of a third-party unity ticket. He wrote that at that time "a group of political consultants from both sides of the political aisle [took] steps to draft a third-party ticket for president in 2008, guided by a belief that neither the Republican nor Democratic parties are adequately addressing the problems of average Americans."⁹³ A year later, James Carney of Time magazine, wrote an article about a possibility of New York City's Mayor Michael Bloomberg running for president as an independent. Carney quoted the mayor's political adviser, who said that "Bloomberg might run if the two parties put forward nominees that play to their base constituencies but turn off the center of the electorate." It's not impossible that that window

⁹² Infoplease. (2000). *Presidential Election of 2000, Electoral and Popular Vote Summary*. Retrieved from <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0876793.html>

⁹³ Cillizza, C. (30 May, 2006). 2008: Time Ripe for Third Party Ticket? *The Washington Post*. <http://voices.washingtonpost.com/thefix/eye-on-2008/2008-a-third-party-bid.html>

could open and he could run a viable campaign,” Sheekey [said] with careful deliberation.

“And if it opens, he should consider it.”⁹⁴

However, as the presidential debates and primaries for the two major political parties began in late 2007, the talk of the third-parties and their candidates disappeared for quite some time. Only in late May of 2008, did the Libertarian Party made some newsworthy headlines when it picked former Republican Congressman Bob Barr of Georgia as its presidential candidate, “a move that that could attract some conservatives turned off by the Republican Party,”⁹⁵ said Steven Thomma of McClatchy Newspapers. Thomma went on to say that with Barr being one of the best known candidates, his supporters “hoped that fame would help him draw more news media attention and increase the party’s fall vote.” Barr, who in recent years soured on the Republican Party, opposed the war in Iraq, the Patriot Act, “suspension of civil liberties in the name of fighting terrorism, and the rapid rise in domestic government spending.” Thomma reported that Barr insisted that he did not intend to play just a spoiler role in 2008, as Nader did in 2000.

In the summer of 2008, a survey conducted by Zogby International, showed that some of the third-party candidates were doing relatively well in the polls. In that survey, Bob Barr won the support of 6% of the people, with Ralph Nader, who once again declared his candidacy for the presidential elections, getting about 2%.⁹⁶ In an August poll conducted by ABC and Washington Post, both Barr and Nader received 4% support from the registered

⁹⁴ Carney, J. (14 May, 2007). Will Bloomberg Run for President? *TIME Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1620821,00.html>

⁹⁵ Thomma, S. (25 May, 2008). Libertarians pick Bob Barr as their presidential candidate. *The McClatchy*. Retrieved from <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/251/story/38518.html>

⁹⁶ Zogby International. (06 July, 2008). *Zogby Poll: Building Mo-bama! Democrat Leads McCain in Electoral College Tally, 273-160. The Democrat also leads 44% to 38% in the nationwide horserace test as Libertarian Bob Barr wins 6.* Retrieved from <http://www.zogby.com/templates/printnews.cfm?id=1523>

voters.⁹⁷ The somewhat strong showing by the third-party candidates in polls conducted over the summer did not last long, however. In a September survey conducted once again by ABC and Washington Post, the support for Nader fell to a total of 3%, while Barr's support fell to a total of 1%.⁹⁸ The downward trend for the third-party candidates continued in October, as according to an AP-GfK poll, Barr and Nader were only supported by about one percent point each among the likely electorate.⁹⁹ In the end, on election day the campaign of Ralph Nader received support of almost 740 thousand voters, which corresponded to 0.56% of the total popular vote, while Bob Barr garnered almost 523 thousand votes, which corresponded to 0.40% of the total popular vote. The other third-party candidates received in total a little over 745 thousand votes, which corresponded to 0.57% of the electorate.¹⁰⁰

In summary, it is fair to say that a rather weak performance of the third-parties and their candidates had absolutely no effect on the outcome of the 2008 presidential campaign. Thus from the main stand point of realignment theory, the notion that third parties tend to perform better during realignment certainly did not come to fruition during the current realignment cycle. It appears that both parties, especially the Democratic Party after the contentious primaries, were able to coalesce their respected supporters. Barack Obama, being a transformative and in many ways populist candidate, took away reasons for many leftist Democrats to vote again for somebody like Ralph Nader. The same could be said about the

⁹⁷ The Washington Post Editorial. (19-22 August, 2008). *Washington Post-ABC News Poll*. Retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/documents/postpoll_082308.html

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ GfK Rober Public Affairs & Media. (16-20 October, 2008). *The AP-GfK Poll*. Retrieved from http://www.ap-gfcpoll.com/pdf/AP-GfK_Poll_3_Topline_FINAL.pdf

¹⁰⁰ Leip, D. *Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections. 2008 Presidential General Election Results*. Retrieved from <http://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/national.php?year=2008&off=0&elect=0&f=0>

McCain campaign, which with the selection of Sarah Palin, also diminished, for the most part, the rationale under which conservative voters would have chosen a third party candidate. That in turn was the primary cause as to why the support for the third parties was rather minimal. Furthermore, the spike in popularity of the third parties that was witnessed in the 1990s and to the lesser extent in the 2000 election was temporary, just as described in Burnham's second type of third-party activity, and did not resemble anything close to the third party movement in the late 1940s and 1960s. Therefore, from the standpoint of theory, the activities of the third parties did not in any way play a role in the hypothesized realignment.

CHAPTER 8

A NEW DOMINANT VOTER CLEAVAGE, IDEOLOGICAL POLARIZATION OF THE ELECTORATE AND NATIONAL ISSUE-BASED ELECTION IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The history of realignments shows that each of them, more or less, was associated with some sort of ideological or issue-based polarization within a significant portion of American electorate. The political and socio-economic divide among the electorate, which at times can be extreme, is the heart of the theoretical notion of voter cleavage driving realignments, a theory which was, in part, developed by Sundquist, who argued that “a new “issue” or “cluster of related issues” can provoke a realignment. This cleavage was associated with slavery in the 1850s, with 1890s questions over “what should the government do about the hardships of the farmers and about inequality in the distribution of wealth and income among regions and classes” in the 1890s, and with questions over “what should the government do about the Great Depression?” in the 1930s (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 23). Schattschneider, per Mayhew, also believed that realignments were brought on by a durable new “cleavage” or electoral conflicts between different voting groups (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 22).

Although many political topics can divide the electorate into competing partisan groups before an election, during realignments critical issues cause extreme polarization

among the great number of voters. The issue of slavery (and ultimately civil war), which was deferred many times by politicians in the early 1800s, was finally front and center in the critical election of 1860. Burnham, who initially introduced the concept of ideological polarization in relation to the realignment theory, believed that during realignments like the election of 1860, "the rise in intensity is associated with a considerable increase in ideological polarization, at first within one or more of the major parties and then between them. Issue distances between the parties are markedly increased, and elections tend to involve highly salient issue-clusters, often with strongly emotional and symbolic overtones, far more than is customary in American electoral politics" (Burnham, 1970, pg. 7). Furthermore, Burnham contended that during the political campaigns associated with a particular realignment or a critical election, "the insurgents' political style is exceptionally ideological by American standards; this in turn produces a sense of grave threat among defenders of the established order, who in turn develop opposing ideological positions" (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 24).

Along with dominant voter cleavage and ideological polarization of the electorate comes the idea that during realignments, the House elections hinge more often than not on national issues, while local issues often dominate House elections in off-realignment years. Volatile issues that cause realignment affect not only presidential elections, but congressional as well, as most policy proposals that are offered on the campaign trails by the presidential contenders have to go through the Congress as well. David W. Brady, according to Mayhew, emphasized the importance of that point due to his theoretical notion that realigning elections set national priorities and enable Congress "to overcome its alleged chronic problems of 'inertia' and 'incrementalism' in the policy realm" (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 100).

Paulson, who researched and analyzed the compositions of the two major political parties during the period of the past three realignments, from 1896-1964 to be exact, revealed that the Democratic Party was composed of many different and sometimes competing factions. He wrote that the Southern Democrats, who were disproportionately conservative and pro-slavery before the Civil War and “pro-white supremacy after Reconstruction, were often found in rural alliance with western populists at the turn of the twentieth century” (Paulson, 2000, pg. 43). On the other hand, the “Northern Democrats were divided between the party regulars of the urban machines, supported by a largely working-class electoral base, and reform factions with a more middle-class electoral base” (Paulson, 2000, pg. 43). Although consisting of many big factions, the Southern Democrats from the time of the end of Reconstruction to the middle of the 20th century represented the electoral base of the party and was the most dominant faction during that period as well.

Unlike the Democrats, the GOP in the early third of the 20th century was fundamentally a two-faction party. Although based in the Northeast, the Republican Party was also strong in the Midwest and the West coast, up until the 1932 New Deal election. The Northeast area was mostly represented by the “Wall Street” faction, where as the other areas mostly consisted of different “Main Street” factions. The “Wall Street” faction at that time, “represented the interests of big business: monopoly and international capital” (Paulson, 2000, pg. 74). It also supported “the gold standard and high tariffs, and generally opposed government regulation of the economy” (Paulson, 2000, pg. 74). The “Main Street” faction was more progressive and populist at times. It represented “small, competitive capital, with its local roots and (sometimes) national markets” (Paulson, 2000, pg. 74). However, unlike the “Wall Street” bloc, it was more supportive of government regulation on the economy and

on other financial issues. It was also more active in the areas of environmental protection and foreign affairs.

The stock market crash in 1929 and the ensuing Great Depression shook up these existing voter alliances, although mostly within the GOP. Franklin Roosevelt, who in 1932 campaigned on the New Deal programs of increased role and support of the federal government, was able to add to the traditional Democratic block of the Southerners by reaching out to new electoral groups of minorities (African Americans, ethnic Americans, and Jews), voters from big urban centers, and farmers –pilfering from elements of the Republican base at the time (Maisel, Buckley, 2004, pg. 51). The Republican coalition, on the other hand, consisted of nonunion members, financially well-off people who were not affected by the Great Depression, whites, Protestants, residents of smaller cities and rural areas. Maisel and Buckley wrote that “none of these groups was much more loyal to the Republican Party than the nation as a whole. That is, the Republicans attracted voters disaffected by the Democratic Party, but those disaffected were so few as to constitute only a losing coalition during the period of the New Deal and its immediate aftermath” (Maisel, Buckley, 2004, pg. 51).

Maisel and Buckley went on to argue that the newly defined party division reflected a voter cleavage in the American political system that endured for essentially the next three decades. During that period, the issues that divided the electorate were still the New Deal issues, and the political agenda was defined by the same question: “does the federal government have a responsibility to serve as the employer of last resort, intervene actively in the economy, and help those who were unable to help themselves?” (Maisel, Buckley, 2004, pg. 51). Maisel and Buckley contended that when that question changed in the middle of

1960s and other issues, such as the war in Vietnam and race relations took precedence among the electorate, the New Deal coalition began to unravel and the Democrats experienced the same kind of fundamental shakeup that undermined the GOP in the 1930s.

The Civil Rights legislations that was pushed through Congress in the 1960s and eventually signed by President Lyndon Johnson into law, was the proverbial last 'nail in the coffin' for the New Deal coalition. President Johnson made a comment shortly after he signed the 1964 Civil Rights Act that "I think we just delivered the South to the Republican Party for a long time to come," (Wickham, 2004). Paulson added that among Southerners, the Democrats from that region provided the most of the opposition (Paulson, 2000, pg. 173). With that, a redefinition of voter cleavages within the two political parties began.

Maisel and Buckley wrote that the Democratic Party was split by the war along the lines of social class, with more liberal members – the academics and the upper class citizens – opposing the military actions in the Vietnam, whereas the working class was mainly supporting it as the soldiers fighting in the conflict were mainly descendents from the lower class households. Black voters and other minorities, helped by newly enacted civil rights legislation registered and turned out to vote in numbers never before seen, while white voters "began to look for conservative Republican alternatives, but they had difficulty finding them below the presidential level because the Republican Party as an organization was so moribund throughout the South that it ran few credible candidates for any office" (Maisel, Buckley, 2004, pg. 54). Finally, when the 1968 election took place, at least on the Presidential level, the split within the Democratic Party led to a situation when a majority of conservative suburban voters in the Western, mountain and Southern states voted for the Republican Richard Nixon.

In the decades following the 1968 realignment, the Republicans on the Presidential level, with some help from conservative Southern Democrats in Congress, initiated the shift in the domestic policy agenda away from the heavy involvement of the federal government and its redistributing policies, as was the case during the New Deal. It is important to note that those Southern Democrats still believed in Government's responsibility to regulate businesses, but they also believed that many of those federal policies went too far, especially when it came to the issues of race. Fueled in part by the so called Southern Strategy¹⁰¹, the GOP was able to pass legislation by playing on the fears of the growing Southern electorate and their dissatisfaction with welfare and other policies that benefited minorities and especially Blacks (Aistrup, 1996, pg. 36).

In addition to capturing the so called "economic" voters who were fed up with Democratic excesses in terms of "tax and spend" issues, the GOP was also able to draw "cultural" or value voters, who were not comfortable with the "counterculture of the sixties, including feminism, gay rights, abortion rights, decriminalization of drugs, and sexual freedoms" (Judis, Teixeira, 2002, pg. 24). In the presidential and congressional elections that took place in the 1980s, the Republicans picked up those cultural voters from what used to be many Democratic strongholds throughout the country. Judis and Teixeira wrote that aside from gaining votes among the antiabortion Catholics, the most important defections to the Republicans over values "came from white Protestant evangelicals in the South" (Judis, Teixeira, 2002, pg. 24). They went on to say that "these voters made up about two-fifths of

¹⁰¹ Southern Strategy is described as a policy approach used since the late 1960s by the Republican Party in attracting southern white voters who were hostile to the federal government's commitment to racial integration and equality. Kalk, Bruce H. *The Origins of the Southern Strategy*. Lexington Books, 2001.

the white electorate in the South and about one-seventh of the white electorate elsewhere” (Judis, Teixeira 2002, pg. 24). Additionally, Ronald Reagan’s electoral coalition added Midwestern blue-collar Democrats – a group that was later dubbed Reagan Democrats, to the existing mix of traditional farm-state and the Northeastern moderates.

Throughout 1980s and 90s, with its continuing reliance on the Southern Strategy, the Republican Party utilized a three pronged approach in the attempt to expand its electoral reach and at the same time. The made it a point to constantly emphasize Welfare programs as pure waste, government regulations as those that hurt business expansion as well as global trade, and lastly their belief in traditional family values. In fact, the analysis of the results of the 1994 Congressional elections showed that the GOP finally gained a complete majority in the South, with Larry Sabato noting that the 1994 Republican wave “could be the culmination of 30 years worth of rolling realignment in the South” (Aistrup 1996, pg. 60). Aistrup added that the Republicans were able to regained the upper hand on such issues as taxes and big government, to “recast the anticommunist pillar into an argument to rebuild the military..., and recast racial issues into a focus on crime and welfare” (Aistrup, 1996, pg. 60). Even during the Democratic administration of Bill Clinton, the GOP was able to pass a number of legislation aimed at curtailing “Big Government” spending, such as Welfare reform of 1996 and the Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

The GOP’s 1980 surge and 1994 triumph continued in the 2000 elections. With economy doing quite well, and the budget surpluses projected for the foreseeable future, after 8 years of a moderate Democratic presidency the GOP nevertheless won a dramatic presidential victory, largely by leveraging voter cleavages over values issues. In an exit polls conducted by Los Angeles Times during 2000 presidential elections, it was revealed that

George W. Bush was preferred by the “values” electorate over Al Gore. Voters chose the Republican when it came to the issues of “honesty and integrity”, “moral and ethical values”, “taxes” and “abortion”.¹⁰²

With the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, followed by the start of the war in Afghanistan as well as discussions of potential military actions in Iraq, the 2002 mid-term elections were dominated by the theme of national security. Gary C. Jacobson, analyzing the results of the 2002 Congressional elections, wrote that there was an obvious shift in the political focus of the electorate - away from domestic issues and towards national defense and foreign policy. He further explained that although polls showed Democratic advantages on such issues as health care, education, Social Security, prescription drug benefits, taxes, abortion, unemployment, the environment, and corporate corruption, the survey also showed that the Republicans were mostly preferred with dealing with terrorism, the possibility of war with Iraq, the situation in the Middle East, and foreign affairs. Jacobson added that “voters put terrorism and the prospect of war at the top of their list of concerns, providing a major assist to the Republican cause. Without September 11, the election would have hinged on domestic issues, and the talk of invading Iraq would have seemed like ‘wagging the dog,’ a transparent attempt to deflect attention from the economy” (Jacobson, 2003).

Analysis of the 2004 presidential and congressional elections showed that the voter cleavage and ideological stance among the electorate did not change dramatically from the 2000 general and 2002 mid-terms elections. Still, even though the composition the Republican and Democratic coalitions stayed relatively the same, the shift of the support

¹⁰² Polling Report Inc. (2009). *Election 2000 exit poll*. Retrieved from <http://www.pollingreport.com/2000.htm#EXIT>

toward the GOP was evident. In his re-election campaign against Democratic candidate John Kerry, George W. Bush kept the same advantage in his level of support among the Men (+11%), while narrowing his disadvantage among the Women from -11% in 2000 to just -3%, according to the New York Times exit poll table¹⁰³. Furthermore, the survey showed that President Bush increased his support among Whites, from +12% to +17%, as well as improved his vote percentage totals among the Midwestern and Southern electorate. Among the so called value voters, Republicans gained among the Protestants, Catholics and Jewish voters. His advantage over John Kerry within the evangelical voters was at +31%. Among the issues that concerned the electorate the most, the CNN exit poll showed that Bush led Kerry on the issue of Moral Values (22% of the polled selected it as the most important issue) 80% to just 18%, and on Terrorism (19% of the polled selected it as the most important issue) 86% to the 14%. Thomas Mann in his study of the 2004 election results for the Brookings Institute concluded that the motivation in this core Republican constituency - the values electorate-- was underestimated. He went on to say that "we figured that most of the anger was on the Democratic side, and we really didn't appreciate the extent to which other Americans felt that the whole nature of their belief systems—their faith, their lifestyles—were being threatened, and this was an opportunity to act on that."¹⁰⁴

Overall, after decades of growing differences between the voters, especially in different geographical regions of the country, the political polarization among the electorate visibly intensified leading up to 2004 elections. Paul Krugman, for instance, noticed that

¹⁰³ The New York Times Editorial. (5 November, 2008). *Election Results 2008. National Exit Polls Table*. Retrieved from <http://elections.nytimes.com/2008/results/president/national-exit-polls.html>

¹⁰⁴ Brookings Institute. (5 November 2004). *Event Summary: The 2004 Election Results*. Retrieved from <http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2004/1105elections.aspx>

since the 1980s, a rise in polarization was directly affected by a rapidly increasing income inequality (Krugman, 2008, pg. 4). He wrote that since the Reagan administration, economists began noticing a sharp rise in income disparity and with that, many politicians began to gravitate toward the ends of the left-right political spectrum. Krugman also mentioned that during George Bush's second term, the income inequality reached the levels not seen since the 1920s, and with that, political polarization reached one of the highest levels. Krugman explained this phenomenon by saying that due to globalization and technological revolution in the 1980s and 1990s, income inequality rose when an elite minority pulled away from the rest of the population. The GOP tended to gravitate itself to this elite group more so than the Democrats. With that, he elaborated that the GOP became the party of the few and the fortunate ones, while the Democrats represented those left behind (Krugman, 2008, pg. 6).

Dan Balz of the Washington Post, for his part, also reported that both major political parties became increasingly homogenized and partisan during the same time frame.¹⁰⁵ As did James E. Campbell, who also noticed that the American electorate became more ideologically polarized. He wrote that "more voters indicated either conservative or liberal inclinations, and these corresponded to their party identifications" (Campbell, James E., 2008, pg. 72). What's more, Lewis-Beck, Norpoth and Jacoby suggested that growing voter polarization directly led to a greater concern of the electorate with the outcome of the elections. They wrote that "regardless of their level of political attitude, fewer people did not care how the election turned out in 2000 and 2004 than did not care in the 1950s. A typical comparison is that 57

¹⁰⁵ Balz, D. (29 March 2005). Partisan Polarization Intensified in 2004 Election Only 59 of the Nation's 435 Congressional Districts Split Their Vote for President and House. *The Washington Post*. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A7793-2005Mar28.html>

percent of the 1956 respondents with just one political attitude did not care how the election came out, versus only 29 percent in 2004.” (Lewis-Beck, Norpoth and Jacoby, 2008, pg. 77). The authors went on to suggest that based on their analysis of the election results of the 2000 and 2004 elections, they concluded that there was a correlation between the increase in voter turnout in 2004 elections to the stronger feelings aroused by the candidates in that contest. They wrote that “out measure of preference intensity registers an uptick between 2000 and 2004. Respondents grew more sharply polarized in their affects towards the candidates and parties. The Bush-Kerry matchup generated more heat in the electorate than the Bush-Gore contest” (Lewis-Beck, Norpoth and Jacoby, 2008, pg. 91).

The further proof of increased polarization of the electorate came from Box-Steffensmeier and Schier who realized that the campaign of George W. Bush actually tried to use electoral divisions for their political advantage. The authors wrote that Bush and his political advisor Karl Rove believed that the important fault lines in American politics were real and that “they reflected deep and authentic disagreements over basic questions: about the size of government, about whether popular culture had become too secular and too coarse, about the proper balance of force and diplomacy as the United States asserts its interests abroad” (Box-Steffensmeier and Schier, 2008, pg. 6). They went on to say that because of these powerful disagreements, the electorate was very evenly divided between two distinct worldviews. Box-Steffensmeier and Schier concluded that the imperative of Bush’s political operations was not to blur electoral division but to sharpen them on the most favorable terms.

In the aftermath of the 2004 general elections, the unpopular policies of the GOP which were initiated in the previous four years, as well as new policy proposals that were introduced by the Bush Administration and its congressional allies in 2005 and 2006 led to an

even sharper increase in the polarization of the country's electorate. Abramowitz, who analyzed the events leading up to the 2006 mid-term elections and the results of the congressional contests, discovered those divisive trends as well. Major policy issues, such as the war in Iraq and Immigration reform continued to divide this country's voters. Abramowitz, citing data from the national exit polls, wrote that "the ideological divide within the electorate increased between 2004 and 2006. Almost 90 percent of self-identified liberals voted for a Democratic House candidate while 80 percent of self-identified conservatives voted for a Republican House candidate. The 69 point gap in party support between liberals and conservatives was an all-time record, breaking the previous record of 67 points in 2004" (Abramowitz, 2007). He noted that the largest increase between the 2004 and 2006 elections, among the Democratic electorate, came from the Hispanic voters. While in 2004 the Democratic congressional candidates received only 56 percent of the Hispanic vote, two years later, in large part due to the tough and at times quite hostile, as well as uncompromising positions of the GOP towards illegal immigrants and the Immigration reform in general, the Democratic share among that group of the electorate increased to 70 percent. Michael Gerson, a former Bush staffer and supporter of the immigration reform, warned that unwillingness of the majority of the Republicans, those in the Law and Order faction of the GOP, to support the efforts of the pro-business faction of the party who supported the reform, could mean a substantial shift of Hispanic voters toward the Democrats in southwestern states of Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada and Colorado, as well as Florida. In turn, he cautioned, that could make the national political map unwinnable for Republicans for years to come.¹⁰⁶ Abramowitz also noted that Democrats increased their support among the

¹⁰⁶ Gerson, M. (19 September, 2007). Division Problem. The GOP's Ruinous Immigration Stance. *The*

white voters, while African Americans continued their support of the Democrats overwhelmingly. As a result, he mentioned, the racial divide among the overall electorate was only slightly smaller in 2006 than in 2004.

Abramowitz, in analyzing voting patterns among other voting groups, concluded that voter cleavages were just as large in 2006 as in 2004. He wrote that "the religious divide among white voters remained enormous. White evangelicals, who made up almost the same proportion of the electorate in 2006 as in 2004 (24 percent vs. 23 percent), gave 71 percent of their vote to Republican House candidates. Meanwhile, 74 percent of whites with no religious affiliation voted for Democratic House candidates." Furthermore, his analysis showed that within geographical regions, the divide in the support for the parties remained large. He found that while Democratic candidates received 64 percent of the vote in the Northeast, in the South the support was only at 46 percent. Abramowitz also took notice of the fact that despite the Democratic takeover of the House and Senate, "the South would remained a GOP stronghold in the 110th Congress with 17 of 22 Senate seats and 77 of 131 House seats from the 11 states of the old Confederacy held by Republicans" (Abramowitz, 2007).

Abramowitz's analysis also revealed that no issue was as divisive among the 2006 electorate as was the war in Iraq. Although in general the overall support for the war had declined since 2004, the exit poll statistics for the 2006 mid-terms showed that "Democratic and Republican voters held very divergent views about the war: the overwhelming majority of Democratic voters disapproved of the war and favored withdrawing American troops from Iraq; the overwhelming majority of Republican voters approved of the war and opposed

Washington Post. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/09/18/AR2007091801626.html>

withdrawing American troops in Iraq” (Abramowitz, 2007). In summary of his analysis, Abramowitz came to a conclusion that fundamentally the 2006 elections continued and in many ways reinforced a long-term trend of increased polarization in American politics. He added that the statistics from national and state exit polls demonstrated that the electorate in 2006 remained deeply divided on major policy issues and especially on the war in Iraq.

In another analysis of the 2006 elections, John Judis and Ruy Teixeira found that, for the most part, the demographic groups that voted for Democrats in the late 1990s, but abandoned them in the early 2000s, came roaring back into the fold. For instance, they examined college-educated women, who backed Democrats by 57 percent to 42 percent, as well as single women, who backed Democrats by 66 percent to 33 percent for Republicans. Judis and Teixeira noted that the key swing group among women voters - White working-class women - shifted their allegiances dramatically. While in 2004, they voted Republican 57 percent to 42 percent, in 2006 that 15 point margin shrunk to just five points, as this group backed Republicans by only 52 percent to 47 percent. The authors of the study also discovered that “this movement away from the GOP included a stunning 26-point shift by white working-class women with annual household incomes between \$30,000 and \$50,000, who went from pro-Republican (60 percent to 39 percent) in 2004 to pro-Democratic (52 percent to 47 percent) in 2006”¹⁰⁷ (Judis, Teixeira 2007). Additionally, they found that professionals with postgraduate degrees also moved decisively towards the Democrats. In 2002 midterms, this particular demographic backed Republican candidates by 51 percent to

¹⁰⁷ Judis, J. B., & Teixeira, R. (19 June, 2007). Back to the Future. The re-emergence of the emerging Democratic majority. *The American Prospect*. Retrieved from http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=back_to_the_future061807

45 percent, but in 2006 they flipped towards the Democrats by supporting their candidate by 58 percent to 41 percent.

Moreover, the report also showed that in 2006 the Democrats improved their support among the White working class from 39% in 2004 to 44% in 2006. Judis and Teixeira observed that this 5% improvement within this particular demographic allowed the Democrats to pick up House and Senate seats in traditionally Republican states such as Indiana “(where the white working class makes up 66 percent of the voting electorate); two seats in Iowa (where it makes up 72 percent); a Senate seat in Montana (which is 68 percent white working-class); and a Senate seat, a House seat, and the governorship in Ohio (which is 62 percent white working-class)”¹⁰⁸ (Judis, Teixeira 2007). Last but not least, the Democrats received a substantial amount of support in 2006 from voters ages 18 to 29 – the ‘Millenials’ which helped achieve the overall election victory of Democrats. This fastest growing demographic group in the nation chose the Democratic congressional candidates over the Republicans by 60 percent to 38 percent.

The aforementioned historical information, statistics and reports described several important trends concerning voter polarization and cleavage in the aftermath of the 2006 elections. After being thoroughly dominated by the Republicans in several consecutive electoral contests prior to 2006, the Democrats were able to reverse their losing trends. The contentious issues of the war in Iraq and Economy among others, as well as the overall unpopularity of decades old Republican policies led to rather dramatic shifts in support among several very important groups of voters. The Democrats regained their solid advantage among women, and increased their lead among the fastest growing electoral groups of

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

Hispanics and 18-29 voters. Furthermore, the Blue vs. Red (Democrat vs. Republican) division among the electorate was continuing to grow, with Democrats were expanding their lead in the Democratic leaning areas such as Northeast and coastal West, while the GOP was still doing quite well in the Deep South.

Leading up to the 2008 general elections, the overall theme of 'Change' was prevalent throughout the majority of the electoral contests in the country. To be more specific, empirical as well as qualitative data showed that 2008 elections, especially on the presidential level, turned out to be a Generational Change election. Arguably, 2008 was the year when the 'new-age America', which consisted of young, diverse/ethnic population and more tolerant to the social issues, battled the 'Baby-boomer/old America', which represented less diverse (more white), conservative and in some ways nationalistic population. Looking back at the 1968 elections, 2008 elections represented in many ways a reversal of the 40 year old contest, with young voters choosing to show their strength in the voting booths as oppose to participating in violent confrontations with police. This generational divide, in retrospect, greatly affected voter cleavage formation as well as contributed to the high polarization of the electorate.

The first signs of the generational conflict appeared actually during the Democratic presidential primaries, when Age became a major factor in the formation of the voter cleavage for the general elections. Katharine Seelye, of the New York Times, noted in her article that "in a campaign where demographics seem to be destiny, one of the most striking factors is the segregation of voters by age."¹⁰⁹ She commented that throughout primaries,

¹⁰⁹ Seelye, K. Q. (22 April, 2008). In Clinton vs. Obama, Age Is One of the Greatest Predictors. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/22/us/politics/22age.html?_r=1

statistics showed that older voters gravitated towards Senator Clinton, who is 60, and in a way this demographic group became her core constituency. On the other hand, younger voters have shown primary after primary their strong support for Senator Obama, who is 46 and represents a different generation of voters. Age, Seelye said, was "one of the most consistent indicators of how someone might vote - more than sex, more than income, more than education. Only race is a stronger predictor of voting than age, and then only if a voter is black, not if he or she is white." Mentioned in her articles were sample exit polls which showed that 57 percent of voters 65 and older have supported Senator Clinton and 36 percent have supported Senator Obama. The numbers were almost in reverse when it came to voters age 30 and younger. Some 59 percent of them supported Obama while 38 percent supported Clinton. Mara Liasson's article for NPR, confirmed Seelye's findings. She also indicated that although the candidacies of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton divided the Democratic Party on the issues of race, income and education, age was the primary demographic indicator among the Democratic primary voters. "The older you are," Liasson said, "the more likely you were to vote for Clinton, and the younger you are, the more likely you were to vote for Obama."¹¹⁰

The success that Obama enjoyed during the primaries among the young vote continued in the general election. The Millennials, while not turning out in disproportionate numbers, according to ABC News¹¹¹, gave the Democrat a stunning 34-point margin, 66

¹¹⁰ Liasson, M. (1 May, 2008). Parsing the Generational Divide for Democrats. *National Public Radio*. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=90076971>

¹¹¹ Langer, G., Morin, R., Hartman, B., Craighill, P., Deane, C., Brodie, M., Moynihan, P., Shapiro, B., & Clement, S. (5 November, 2008). EXIT POLLS: Storm of Voter Dissatisfaction Lifts Obama to an Historic Win. Battered Economy, Partisan Shift in Power and Promise of Change Lift Obama to Victory. *ABC News*. Retrieved from <http://abcnews.go.com/PollingUnit/Vote2008/story?id=6189129&page=1>

percent to 32 percent. For comparison, John Kerry's margin in 2004 elections among 18-29 voters was only nine points. Teixeira remarked that Obama's support among the Millennials was remarkably broad, extending across racial barriers. "He carried not just Hispanics in this age bracket (76 percent to 19 percent) and blacks (95 percent to 4 percent) but also whites (54 percent to 44 percent). Obama's 10-point advantage among white 18- to 29-year-olds starkly contrasts with his 15-point deficit among older whites" (Teixeira, 2009, pg. 12). According to Amanda Ruggeri, Indiana and North Carolina - the states that Obama won by a very slim margin, went Democratic solely because of the Millennials. Barack Obama, she said, "lost every other age category in those states. And in the battleground state of Florida, although Obama had a very slight edge in other age groups overall, it was the 61 percent of youths who cast Democratic ballots that solidified his lead."¹¹²

The 2008 generational conflict was also evident in the perceived uneasiness of the majority of older voters with Obama's race and ethnic background. Joe Garofoli, of the San Francisco Chronicle, claimed that racially rooted attacks on Obama were appearing more frequently and overtly in the last month of the campaign. Additionally, he said, these attacks used what he referred to a hidden or "coded" language. Citing analysts, he brought forth examples of such messages, where GOP's vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin portrayed Obama "as a cultural outsider and friend to terrorists and the dismissive way his Republican opponent, Sen. John McCain, referred to Obama at their Tuesday night debate as "that one.""

¹¹² Ruggeri, A. (6 November, 2008). Young Voters Powered Obama's Victory While Shrugging Off Slacker Image. *U.S. News & World Report*. Retrieved from <http://www.usnews.com/articles/news/campaign-2008/2008/11/06/young-voters-powered-obamas-victory-while-shrugging-off-slacker-image.html>

In numerous other articles, there were constant references of McCain and Palin rallies where their supporters in the crowd were often heard of yelling what would be considered hidden or coded messages of racism, intertwined with incendiary comments referring to Barack Obama's African heritage, his connections with William Ayers - a college professor and a former member of the domestic terrorist group the Weather Underground who bombed U.S. facilities to protest the Vietnam war, as well as other associations. Frank Rich, in his OP-ED for the New York Times on October 11th of 2008, summarized what had been the most common inflammatory remarks towards Senator Obama. He wrote that escalation in rhetoric had been witnessed at recent GOP events and he insisted that the dangerous oratory should be a cause for alarm as it could lead to violence. He noted that quite often inciting remarks were heard at McCain-Palin rallies: "the raucous and insistent cries of 'Treason!' and 'Terrorist!' and 'Kill him!' and 'Off with his head!'" as well as the uninhibited slinging of racial epithets, are actually something new in a campaign that has seen almost every conceivable twist."¹¹³ Rich suggested that the rhetoric often spouted at campaign events by Sarah Palin, where she would insinuate that Obama "launched his political career in the living room of a domestic terrorist" or that he is "palling around with terrorists," as well as that Obama is "not a man who sees America the way you and I see America," and that Obama was "an enemy of American troops." Rich went on to say that the rhetorical conflation of Obama with terrorism was stoked further by the repeatedly mentioning of Obama's middle name Hussein by surrogates introducing the GOP ticket at these rallies.

¹¹³ Rich, F. (11 October, 2008). The Terrorist Barack Hussein Obama. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/12/opinion/12rich.html?_r=1&adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1253081162-A9YT16yDdTH5Gypf6JqAQQ

Perhaps the best illustration of this wild and inflammatory rhetoric came from the McCain-Palin town-hall type events in Minnesota, when one of the attendees - Gayle Quinnell, took the microphone and proclaimed the following: "I don't trust Obama. I have read about him. He's an Arab."¹¹⁴ Niel MacDonald, a reporter for CBC, noted that McCain, to his credit, quickly corrected the obvious misstatements. MacDonald mentioned that after the event, Gayle Quinnell remained resolute. "Obama, she told reporters after her moment on stage last week with McCain, is "a Muslim and a terrorist . . .all the people agree with what I said."¹¹⁵

In the immediate aftermath of Barack Obama's victory in the 2008 presidential elections, after one of the most divisive and polarizing campaigns in American history, the raw emotions of the electorate were evident in many journalistic accounts. Although a vast majority of the stories described joy and happiness among the big portion of the electorate associated with this history and monumental victory, there were plenty of news accounts that described conservative backlash to the Obama's win. Tim Shipman, a reporter for Telegraph – a British publication - wrote that although Barack Obama's election was mostly met with celebrations around the world, "for some Americans his honeymoon is over before he has even taken office."¹¹⁶ He mentioned a highly emotional denunciation of Obama by Republican Congressman Paul Brown, who not only called then President-elect a Marxist, but also "compared his plans for a national service corps - to help out in natural disasters - to

¹¹⁴ Macdonald, N. (16 October, 2008). Obama 'Muslim' rumor: Ugly, false and out in the open. *CBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/world/usvotes/story/2008/10/15/f-vp-macdonald.html>

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Shipman, T. (15 November, 2008). Conservative backlash begins against Barack Obama. *The Daily Telegraph*. Retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/barackobama/3464679/Conservative-backlash-begins-against-Barack-Obama.html>

the formation of the Nazi brownshirts.” “That’s exactly what Hitler did in Nazi Germany,” said Georgia’s Representative Brown. “We can’t be lulled into complacency... Adolf Hitler was elected in a democratic Germany. I’m not comparing Barack Obama to Adolf Hitler, what I’m saying is there is the potential of going down that road.” Shipman also discovered that a Roman Catholic priest in South Carolina “told his parishioners not to seek Holy Communion if they voted for Mr Obama, because supporting him “constitutes material cooperation with intrinsic evil” as the President-elect backs abortion rights.” In another story, Shipman mentioned an incident in Madison County, Idaho, where the school superintendent was forced to remind teachers and bus drivers that students must show proper respect for elected officials. This action was requested after parents complained that children on one school bus were chanting, “Assassinate Obama!” A story on National Public Radio as of November 25th, 2008, confirmed accounts of violence in the aftermath of the election of President Obama. “Communities around the country,” the report mentioned, “have seen a spike in racial violence since the presidential election of Barack Obama. In the few weeks since Election Day, cross burnings, racist graffiti and other alleged hate crimes have been reported.”¹¹⁷

In summary, these documented facts show that race and age were one of the biggest factors that contributed to the polarization of the electorate. Younger voters, who are more tolerant, ended up being a lot more comfortable with taking a chance on Barack Obama and his left of center policies, where as southern and older voters, due to their racial tendencies or

¹¹⁷ National Public Radio. (25 November, 2008). *Obama Win Sparks Rise in Hate Crimes, Violence*. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=97454237>

outright fears of change, voted for the Republican candidate who represented a status quo in terms of their version of 'social stability'.

However, Martin Sieff of UPI, concluded that for the many voters these kind of fear tactics and conspiracy theories relating to the Obama's racial background might have worked during elections in the midst of the economic boom, but with the country being overtaken by the economic crisis, these particular fears have been largely displaced by the economic fears. Sieff wrote that "the Republican fear card has been trumped -- not by Obama's "politics of hope" but by a far more visceral and direct Fear Factor: the fear of scores of millions of people losing their homes, their jobs and their retirement savings. The fear of economic ruin appears to have eclipsed the fears of Obama that the Republicans had sought to play on in this election that the senator from Illinois is black, relatively young, extremely inexperienced, was raised in a Muslim country, and that he allegedly was Muslim by faith in his youth but later lied about it."¹¹⁸

In the closing weeks of the campaign, the public debate essentially evolved around the future economic direction of the country, and policy questions relating to the role of the federal government in stabilizing the economy resurfaced, just as they did in the 1930s. In poll after poll, a growing trend was revealed that showed that a clear majority of voters believed that federal government should do more in fixing the economy. In one of those surveys from September 23rd of 2008, conducted by CNN and Opinion Research Corp, some 62% of the voters believed that government should step in and provide economic help, while

¹¹⁸ Sieff, M. (20 October, 2008). Obama, McCain play Fear Factor in presidential race. *UPI*. Retrieved from <http://www.upi.com/news/issueoftheday/2008/10/20/Obama-McCain-play-Fear-Factor-in-presidential-race/UPI-73981224520141/>

37% answered that it should stay out and let the economy recover on its own.¹¹⁹ An October 2, 2008 poll conducted by NBC News, Wall Street Journal and MySpace, found that 72% of first-time voters believed that government should be more active in solving problems.¹²⁰

The decades-old question regarding government regulations was also addressed in many surveys. A Los Angeles Times and Bloomberg poll of October 15th, 2008 revealed that over 70% of Americans thought that lack of regulation was partly responsible for the collapse of the financial system in this country. Additionally, over 45% of the respondents believed that there was too little regulation in business, while 27% said there was too much.¹²¹ As a point of comparison, David Pierson of the LA Times pointed out that in 1981, only 18% of Americans thought that there was too little regulation of business whereas in 1991 that number was at 27%.

The public debate on the economic issues, dominating in the presidential race, played a big role in Congressional races as well. Hulse's analysis showed that the Banking Bailout bill had a big impact in many swing/competitive districts throughout the country. The bottom line is that the collapse of economy ended up displacing many so called local issues in many congressional races. Lesley Clark and Luisa Yanez, for instance, reported that in many of the House races in Florida, local issues such as dealings with Cuba, were largely ignored.¹²² Carl Hulse and David M. Herszenhorn reported that in district after district, House Democrats ran

¹¹⁹Rhee, F. (22 September, 2008). Voters worried by Wall Street crisis. *The Boston Globe*. Retrieved from http://www.boston.com/news/politics/politicalintelligence/2008/09/voters_worried.html

¹²⁰Murray, S. (2 October, 2008). New voters like Obama, but may not cast vote. *LiveMint/The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.livemint.com/2008/10/01211316/New-voters-like-Obama-but-may.html?atype=tp>

¹²¹Pierson, D. (15 October, 2008). Americans want more regulation of economy, poll finds. *The Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/oct/15/business/fi-econpoll15>

¹²²Clark, L., & Yanez, L. (28 October, 2008). *Economy, not Cuba, at heart of 3 congressional races*. Retrieved from <http://www.miamiherald.com/obama/v-fullstory/story/744170.html>

advertisements “seeking to link Republicans with President George W. Bush and his economic record.”¹²³ In the end, in many of the congressional races, the popularity of Barack Obama and his presence on the top of the ballot created the so called coattail effect for Democratic congressional candidates. The Democrats vying to either retain or win new seats in Congress mostly stuck to the similar campaign themes of Obama, such as the economy and the need for change. On the Republican side, especially in the competitive districts, the national theme of the campaign was actually missing, mainly due to the unpopularity of President Bush and Republican brand, and the somewhat unenthusiastic reception that Republicans had for their non-traditional nominee, John McCain. The GOP candidates for the most part ended up concentrating their campaign on showcasing the federal dollars they were able to bring to the district or how they have had a history of bipartisan legislative accomplishments. Republican localizing efforts aside, most serious analysis found that 2008 was a “nationalized” election, with the electorate making a watershed judgment on fundamental national policy directions, such as what to do about the economy.

The deep ideological polarization of the electorate in the 2008 elections shaped a voter alignment which in turn has a possibility of dominating many future elections - the very essence of what we mean when we say a “realignment” has occurred in any given election. The post-election analysis of the exit polls showed that the voter cleavage which was formed within the period of primaries, with the possible exception of the Hispanic voters, closely mimicked the voting cleavage in general election. The groups of voters which Barack Obama

¹²³ Hulse, C., & Herszenhorn, D. M. (9 October, 2008). Republicans face tough races for U.S. Congress. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/09/world/americas/09iht-09cong.16803901.html?pagewanted=2>

had a hard time winning over and which tended to voted for Hillary Clinton in the Democratic primaries –blue-collar workers, Roman Catholics and older voters - voted heavily for John McCain. Whereas the groups of the electorate that went heavily for Obama during the primaries - the young, college educated and minority voters - continued their support for him in the general elections.

From the standpoint of realignment theory, therefore, the results of the 2008 general elections showed two different things. The composition of the electorate had changed in the last forty years and though the coalitions of voters supporting each political party have not changed that much, the dramatic growth of pro-democratic groups within that existing electoral cleavage catalyzed a pro-Democratic realignment in 2008. The 2008 presidential elections, from the standpoint of the voter cleavage, featured a tremendous growth within the electorate that heavily supports the Democratic Party and its agenda, such as young and minority voters.

On the other hand, the voter groups, such as white-working class and socially conservative voters, on which the Republican Party relied so heavily in its past successes have shrunk in their numbers. Ruy Teixeira, in a report on rapidly changing demographics and how this phenomenon affected the outcome of the 2008 elections, noted that in the past twenty years, “between 1988 and 2008, the minority share of voters in presidential elections has risen by 11 percentage points, while the share of increasingly progressive white college graduate voters has risen by four points. But the share of white-working class voters, who have remained conservative in their orientation, has plummeted by 15 points” (Teixeira 2009, pg. 1). Teixeira’s analysis of the national exit polls revealed that the overall share of the minority vote rose from 15% in 1988 to 23% in 2004 and rose all the way to 26% in 2008.

Within the overall Minority group of electorate, Teixeira found that from 2004 to 2008, the share of African American voters rose from 11% to percent from 13%. At the same time, he reported that Hispanic vote as a group also rose during the same period, from 8% to 9%. These two ethnic groups ended up voting for Obama overwhelmingly. African Americans voted 95% for Obama to just 4% for McCain in 2008 - a 7% improvement for the Democratic candidate and 7% decline for the Republican, if compared to the 2004 numbers. The biggest change however, came from the Hispanics. In 2004, according to CNN exit polls, Latinos voted 53% for Kerry and 44% for Bush¹²⁴, but in 2008, this group voted 67% to 31% for Obama. To put it in perspective, the Democratic margin of victory among this portion of the electorate quadrupled in just four years.

Teixeira argued that the gains among these minority groups greatly contributed to the Obama's success in many key battleground states. In Ohio – a state which George W. Bush carried in 2004, the number of minority voters rose from 14 to 17 percent. Among them, African Americans supported Obama “by a stunning 95-point margin (97 percent to 2 percent), compared to Kerry’s 68-point margin (84 percent to 16 percent)” (Teixeira, 2009, pg. 5). In Nevada, Teixeira discovered, the overall share of minority electorate rose from 23 to 31 percent of voters. Among Hispanics, who increased their voting ranks by a five percentage points, Obama received overwhelming support with 76 percent to just 22 percent for McCain. Compared to 2004, this represented a 16% increase in support for the Democrats. Teixeira also noted that in other key battleground states, such as Florida, Obama was able to completely turnaround the traditional Democratic disadvantage among Hispanic

¹²⁴ CNN. (2004). *Election Results: U.S. President / National / Exit Poll*. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/states/US/P/00/epolls.0.html>

voters in that state. In 2004, these heavily Cuban (and thus conservative and anti-communist) voters broke solidly for the GOP, giving Bush a 56-43% advantage over Kerry. But four years later, the same electorate supported Obama by 57% to 42% for McCain. According to Teixeira, this is a significant change for Florida, as for years, Hispanic voters in that state were generally considered GOP leaning, especially with the conservative voting bloc of Cuban Americans being a large part of it.

Post election observations by Gary Segura, indicated that this dramatic shift within the minority population represents a sign of a narrowing coalition for the GOP. The Republican Party, he noted, normally gets the majority of its votes from Whites, but that demographic is shrinking as a share of the electorate. Segura went on to conclude that if the GOP's "primary appeal to minority voters is to Latinos - and that was rebuffed and reversed in this election - then the Republican coalition as currently constituted would be significantly less than 50 percent of the electorate."¹²⁵

Taking into the consideration geographical or electoral map, Obama's victory represented a historic shift in terms of overall alignment of states and their support of the two major political parties. The Democrats won on the presidential level in states such as Indiana, North Carolina and Virginia - something they have not been able to do since the 1964 election. Furthermore, what was once considered a Solid South region for the Republicans has even been fractured. Essentially, the 2008 election, on the presidential level, has reduced Republican strength to the regions of Upper Mountain West, the plains states (although Obama won one electoral vote out of Nebraska), and whatever was left out of the fractured

¹²⁵ Stanford Magazine. (26 January, 2009). *Parsing the Vote: How demographic shifts could erode party allegiances*. Retrieved from <http://storybank.stanford.edu/stories/parsing-vote-how-demographic-shifts-could-erode-party-allegiances>

South. The Democrats, who had solid support from the Northeast region, and Western coastal states, now also have firm supported in the Midwest, and their electoral strength is growing in the Mountain West and Southwest as well. Furthermore, in an forthcoming article by Robinson and Noriega, there is evidence that shows electoral changes in the Mountain West region, which were caused in many ways by voter migration, are actually more wide spread than presidential electoral map tends to indicate. They wrote that the

Rocky Mountain West is increasingly electing Democrats to state and national office, helping to shatter GOP dominance of American politics. Colorado, a state once dominated by Republican officials, has recently elected a Democratic state legislature, a Democratic Governor, two Democratic U.S. Senators, and a 2009 U.S. House delegation favoring Democrats five to two. Montana, a state that hadn't elected a Democratic House and Governor for decades, recently turned its state legislature and Governor's office over to the Democrats, and sent a Democrat to the U.S. Senate in 2006. Ten years ago, the eight-state region boasted eight GOP governors. By 2008, there were only three. The GOP's 1990 15-9 advantage in Congressional House seats reversed to a 17-11 Democratic advantage by 2008 (Robinson, Noriega, 2010).

Accordingly, if population totals are added into consideration, Republican strength after 2008 resides in states which are more rural and lightly populated. Teixeira added that "sixteen out of 28 states carried by Obama had 10 or more electoral votes, while just 4 of 21 carried by McCain had that many electoral votes" (Teixeira 2009, pg. 17). Furthermore, his research showed that Obama also carried seven of the eight most populous states, with the only exception of Texas which went for McCain.

In the end, the gradual change in this country's demographics, combined with the tough economic environment not seen since the Great Depression, caused a monumental shift in voter alignment in the aftermath of the 2008 elections. This new voter cleavage promises to be quite durable, considering the continuing influx of Democratic leaning voters in the

immediate future (e.g., the rise in the Hispanic electorate, and the growing influence of the Millennial generation) and accompanied by the decline of the voters which tend to lean towards the Republicans. The assumption of the durability of the Democratic cleavage is based on the notion that the Millennials and ethnic minorities continue to participate in future electoral contests at the same rate as they did in the last two election cycles. This new voter alignment also promises to be more tolerant and in some ways apathetic in relation to the current cultural divides on the social issues of abortion and gay marriage, but at the same time it will be more concerned with the issues of jobs and economy as a whole. Lastly, the dominating issues of jobs and economy in the 2008 election cycle certainly dictated the direction of many races within the House of Representatives. Similarly to the 1932 election, the Democrats increased their overall majority in Congress in big part due to the electorate's distrust of the Republicans on the issues of economy. However, it would be incorrect not to point out that Obama's overall popularity among the Democratic voters also created a coattail effect for many Congressional candidates. With all this said, the evidence suggests that the polarization of the electorate in 2008, correlated with changing voter cleavages and the nationalization of congressional election in large part conforms with Realignment theory.

CHAPTER 9

MAJOR CHANGES IN GOVERNMENTAL POLICY AND REDISTRIBUTIVE EFFECTS OF NEW POLICIES

From the standpoint of American political history, almost all realignments, in conjunction with critical elections, have been followed by some major changes in the policies of the federal government. This notion of major policy changes following realignment was originally developed by Burnham and Schattschneider. For Burnham, realignment represented a turning point or significant alteration in national public policies (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 26). Schattschneider, for his part, found consistent historical evidence that realignments, for the most part, were followed by important policy changes (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 25). Harvey Schantz summarized the concept by saying that there is a strong cause and effect link between realignments and new public policy initiatives. Unlike incremental changes which tend to dominate politics during non-realigning years, major policy changes are "believed to depend upon realigning elections or elections that confer a mandate upon government leaders" (Schantz, 1996, pg. 5). Policy changes, he said, are "facilitated by the processes of leadership turnover and the conversion of incumbent leaders who interpret the election returns." David Brady added that in order for major policy changes to occur, major electoral conditions must change (Brady, 1998, pg. 5). For the most part these types of changes occur during realignments, although that is not always the case.

The political system of the U.S., which consists of checks and balances between all three branches of government, was actually designed by the framers of the constitution to

prevent major policy changes to be implemented consistently. Therefore, in order for a new policy to become a law, it needs to go through a fairly rigorous and at times very long process. During each congressional session, there are hundreds of bills that fail to get approved in one or both chambers of Congress or they get vetoed by the president. If one party in Congress, which has the ability to override the President's veto, does not have a big enough majority, a piece of legislation never becomes a law. James Madison, one of the framers of the U.S. Constitution and who authored Federalist 10 in support of a Republican style of federal government¹²⁶, in fact argued that such a design of our government was necessary to prevent a majority faction or a party from potentially trampling rights of the minority factions. Madison (1787) wrote that:

The smaller the society, the fewer probably will be the distinct parties and interests composing it; the fewer the distinct parties and interests, the more frequently will a majority be found of the same party; and the smaller the number of individuals composing a majority, and the smaller the compass within which they are placed, the more easily will they concert and execute their plans of oppression. Extend the sphere, and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens; or if such a common motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength, and to act in unison with each other. Besides other impediments, it may be remarked, that where there is a consciousness of unjust or dishonorable purposes, communication is always checked by distrust, in proportion to the number whose concurrence is necessary (Madison, 1787).

For these reasons, legislative deadlock or incrementalism is the norm in between realignments when the control of the federal government is divided between the two major parties. In fact, scholars such as Dahl and Lindblom argue that in many ways incrementalism is a preferred way of legislating public policy because it is considered less radical and

¹²⁶ Versus direct democracy way of government. Should not to be confused with a modern day political party.

controlled, the legislative process becomes easier and completely reversible just in case policy changes show overall negative impact (Dahl, Lindblom, 1991, pg. 83). However, during realignments, the resurgent party, more often than not, wins the control of the House and the Senate, at times with big majorities, in addition to the presidency. For the newly elected ruling party, a unified control of the Executive and Legislative branches – something which I will discuss in detail in the next chapter, in theory eliminates at least one obstacle in passing major legislation. With that said, control of both legislative chambers that does not necessarily guarantee automatic passage of the major piece of legislation. Often, the party in the minority can use various parliamentary procedures to either slow down or outright defeat the legislation (e.g., health care reform in 2009). But, if the ruling party has big majorities in Congress, that in turn allows it to enact bills without the minority party having an ability to block progress. And thus, the realignment theory supposes that critical elections produce unified party control of the federal government and that in turn allows the party to push through major pieces of legislation, which generally have a broad support of the voting public, such as the New Deal and Health Care reform of 2009. By knowing that voting public gave the majority party a so called legislative and governing mandate, which in turn allows important changes in governmental policy to actually take place.

Burnham also theorized that major policy changes that are enacted by the federal government following realignments have a class-bias consequence to them and are more or less redistributive in nature. He said that such redistributive policies are the heart of the realignment periods and are “among the most important of their ‘symptoms’” (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 28). Redistributive policies, from the stand point of realignment, go hand in hand with the notion of enacting new major policies after realignment takes place—policies that

reflect the emergence of new voter cleavages and that therefore end up redistributing benefits from one portion of the electorate to another.

Tax cuts or increases are the most commonly used ways of redistributing the wealth in this country. More often than not, when new tax policies are used in redistributive fashion, they become very polarizing to the electorate. Thomas Birkland wrote that redistributive policies are "highly contentious because they are often perceived as zero-sum situations, in which any gain for one interest is accompanied by an equal and opposite loss by the other" (Birkland, 2005, pg. 148). Therefore, strong legislative majorities are needed to pass any sort of new tax laws that affect a large portion of the population. When realignments take place, the popularity of a newly elected president and Congress usually allows the majority party to push through major pieces of legislation, which in one form or another contain provisions of tax redistribution or creation of new governmental programs, which are paid for by new taxes that help one particular portion of the population over another.

Good examples of enactment of major policies and their subsequent redistributive effects after realignments can be seen in new laws that followed the 1860 critical election, when the Republican Abraham Lincoln was elected as President and the GOP had big majorities in both chambers of Congress, as well as following the critical election of 1932, when the Democrats won the presidency and achieved big majorities in the House and the Senate. In the 1860s, according to Mayhew, major policy innovations were enacted in the areas of "education, transportation, banking and currency, homesteading, taxation, and tariff protection during the Civil War as well as that era's well-known bursts of Reconstruction legislation after the war" (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 105). Of course Amendments 13, 14 and 15 to the Constitution, which were passed by the Congress following the end of the Civil War to

abolish slavery, expand citizenship rights to African Americans and outlaw racial discrimination on voting rights are examples of redistributionist policies.¹²⁷ Undeniably, these examples of new policies represented major policy changes from the federal government and obviously had redistributive implications, from the standpoint of Southern Whites losing their property rights to slaves, while former slaves were granted full citizenship rights and privileges.

Similarly, an unprecedented number of reforms were enacted as a result of the passage of New Deal policies, following the disastrous effects of the Great Depression and the subsequent realignment in the early 1930s. During the first months of Roosevelt's presidency, "a never-ending stream of bills was passed, to relieve poverty, reduce unemployment, and speed [up] economic recovery."¹²⁸ By utilizing progressive taxation, the New Deal policies were aimed, according to Ronald Edsforth, at redistributing wealth, income and economic powers. Thus, in 1935, Roosevelt asked Congress to approve raising income taxes on the wealthiest Americans and corporations, as well as "impose new taxes on employers and employees to fund social security pensions and unemployment insurance" (Edsforth, 2000, pg. 162).

The redistributive policies that have been discussed thus far featured so called "downward redistribution" – from wealthiest to poorest. However, by many accounts, the realignment period that started in the late 1960s led to a dramatic reversal of the downward redistribution policies instituted by the New Deal, and ushered in a period of "downward

¹²⁷ Mount, S. (6 February, 2009). The United States Constitution. *U.S. Constitution Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.usconstitution.net/const.html>

¹²⁸ PBS. (22 January, 2009). *Surviving the Dust Bowl*. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/dustbowl/peopleevents/pandeAMEX09.html>

redistribution.” Highlighted during the administrations of Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush, the new conservative tax cutting policies of the post 1968 realignment era benefitted the wealthiest, often at the expense of the middle-class and the poorest. The Trickle-Down economic model, frequently referred to as “Reaganomics,” became especially popular following the watershed 1980 election of Ronald Reagan. Its main premise was that via tax cuts for the most affluent people, “the increase in wealth flows down to those with lower incomes. That’s because the rich are allegedly more likely to spend the additional income, creating more economic activity, which in turn generates jobs and eventually, better paychecks for the less well-off.”¹²⁹

During the 2001-2008 administration of George W. Bush, several tax reduction proposals were signed in to laws, in accordance with this theory, and they showcased the magnitude of the upward redistribution of wealth in terms of tax cuts for the well off. According to the 2002 report released by the non-profit organizations Citizens for Tax Justice and the Children’s Defense Fund, it was found that the enacted \$1.35 trillion dollar Bush’s tax cuts, which went into effect from 2001 and suppose to sunset in 2010, some \$477 billion in tax breaks were targeted for the top one percent of the population, and that this group will average \$342,000 each over the decade. By 2010, about “52 percent of the total tax cuts will go to the richest one percent - whose average 2010 income will be \$1.5 million.”¹³⁰

As hypothesized in this thesis, the realignment took place between 2004 and 2008 elections, which in theory means the end to the upwards redistributionist policies of the last

¹²⁹ Derby, M. S. (30 June, 2009). Trickle-Down Economics Fails to Deliver as Promised. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2009/06/30/trickle-down-economics-fails-to-deliver-as-promised/>

¹³⁰ Citizens for Tax Justice. (12 June, 2002). *Year-by-Year Analysis of the Bush Tax Cuts Shows Growing Tilt to the Very Rich*. Retrieved from <http://www.ctj.org/html/gwb0602.htm>

forty years. While the Democrats retook the control of the Congress in 2006, their new legislation was mostly blocked by the Republicans in the Senate or presidential vetoes. For instance, in 2007 President George W. Bush vetoed an extension of a children's health insurance program – SCHIP, which was supported not only by the Democrats but by many members of the GOP.¹³¹ In many other instances, George W. Bush threatened Democratic held Congress with possible vetoes, and therefore many proposed bills never even made it to the floor for the final debate and vote.¹³² Thus, hardly any meaningful or fundamentally new policies were enacted by the 110th Congress, with the possible exception of the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, which in the essence provided “authority for the Federal Government to purchase and insure certain types of troubled assets for the purposes of providing stability to and preventing disruption in the economy and financial system and protecting taxpayers”..., provided “individual income tax relief, and for other purposes.”¹³³

According to the realignment theory, the election of the Democrat Barack Obama and substantial Democratic majorities in both chambers of Congress potentially means that fundamentally new governmental policies will be enacted in the next two years, starting from 2009. According to Obama's general election website, during his presidency he intends to propose tax cuts for 95 percent of working individuals and families, while raising taxes on the

¹³¹ Abramowitz, M., & Weisman, J. (4 October, 2007). Bush Vetoes Health Measure. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/03/AR2007100300116.html>

¹³² Weisman, J., & Murray, S. (9 March, 2007). Bush Threatens to Veto Democrats' Iraq Plan. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/03/08/AR2007030800206.html>

¹³³ U.S. Government Printing Office. (3 October, 2008). *Public Law 110-343: 110th Congress*. <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-110publ343/content-detail.html>

other 5 percent - to the levels of the 1990s.¹³⁴ He also intends to propose new ground-breaking legislation for the Energy sector, which involves heavy investment in renewable energy research and development.¹³⁵ His put forward new environmental policy - Cap and Trade, which is mainly intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to lessen the effects of Global Warming.¹³⁶ Last but not least, his proposes new legislation that would fundamentally change the current healthcare system in the U.S., something that has not been done since the passage of the Medicare bill by the Lyndon Johnson's administration in 1965.¹³⁷

At the moment of this writing, August of 2009, some of these proposals have already been enacted as laws, but some are either still being debated in Congress or have not been debated yet. For instance, one of the first bills signed by President Obama into law was the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which was designed to preserve and create new jobs, invest \$150 billion into infrastructure repair and new developments, provide \$288 billion in tax relief, invest \$43 billion for energy development and efficiency, extend unemployment insurance, invest \$59 billion into healthcare, provide \$144 billion to the States and local municipalities.¹³⁸ Also, Congress passed a Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009, subsequently signed into law by the president, which expanded health insurance coverage for the children from low income families. As a side note, this particular legislation actually was paid for by imposing additional taxes on cigarettes and

¹³⁴ Organizing for America. (2007-2008). *Responsible Tax Cuts for Ordinary Americans*. Retrieved from http://www.barackobama.com/taxes/index_campaign.php

¹³⁵ Organizing for America. (2007-2008). *New Energy for America*. Retrieved from http://my.barackobama.com/page/content/newenergy_campaign

¹³⁶ Environmental Protection Agency. (2009). *Cap and Trade*. Retrieved from <http://www.epa.gov/captrade/>

¹³⁷ Glass, A. (30 July, 2007). President Johnson signs Medicare bill on July 30, 1965. *Politico*. Retrieved from <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0707/5129.html>

¹³⁸ U.S. Government. (30 August, 2009). *Recovery Act Spending: Track the Money*. Retrieved from <http://www.recovery.gov/?q=content/investments>

other tobacco products.¹³⁹ Furthermore, the currently debated healthcare reform bill, if enacted, promises to expand healthcare coverage to the millions of uninsured Americans, and improve healthcare delivery system as a whole.¹⁴⁰ Some of the proposals relating to this bill would levy tax on high income earners or their expensive healthcare plans, which in effect would create a redistributive effect.¹⁴¹

As of August, 2009, several legislations already have been signed in to law by President Obama, and by many estimates they will have long term and perhaps generational effects on domestic and foreign affairs. For example, new investments of the federal government in renewable energy as part of the 2009 Recovery Act will go a long way towards the goal of decreasing the reliance of this country on fossil fuels and thus reducing dependency on foreign importation of oil. This measure, in part, will also help decrease carbon emissions as well as reduce negative foreign trade balance. Furthermore, if a healthcare reform is enacted, although it is not know what the final bill might look like, it will, fundamentally change the healthcare delivery and related industries as they are currently known. Paul Krugman's analysis on healthcare reform shows that there are short and long term effects of enacting it as soon as possible. He wrote that on the immediate front, by "helping families purchase health insurance as part of a universal coverage plan would be at least as effective a way of boosting the economy as the tax breaks," that made up roughly a third of the 2009 Recovery act. In turn, it would have "the added benefit of directly helping

¹³⁹ National Cancer Institute. (10 February, 2009). *Health Groups Hail Increase in Federal Tobacco Taxes*. Retrieved from <http://www.cancer.gov/ncicancerbulletin/021009/page2>

¹⁴⁰ U.S. Government. (2009). About: Health Care Reform This Year. *Department of Health and Human Services*. Retrieved from <http://www.healthreform.gov/about/index.html>

¹⁴¹ U.S. Government Printing Office. (14 July, 2009). *Congressional Bill: H. R. 3200: 111th Congress*. Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-111hr3200IH/content-detail.html>

families get through the crisis, ending one of the major sources of Americans' current anxiety."¹⁴² Krugman later added that the after effects of passing healthcare reform could be as fundamental and crucial on the policy level as Social Security was to FDR's New Deal (Krugman, 2008, pg. 243).

On another proposed policy matter, currently debated climate change legislation in Congress, if ratified, could have just as many positive consequences as the health care bill. In a report released by the Center for American Progress, it is estimated that another modest governmental investment, in addition to the already earmarked money, in the areas of renewable energy and overall goal of lowering greenhouse gas emissions could lead to a multiplying effects in many areas of public policy. Not only it would have the same effect on global warming as taking an estimated half a billion cars off the road by the year 2020, but it would also have an effect of another stimulus package as it is expected to create an estimated 2.5 million jobs that cannot be easily outsourced to other countries.¹⁴³

From the standpoint of realignment theory, the above mentioned new legislations, whether already passed by Congress and signed into laws by the president or are still being debated, arguably will have wide ranging long term effects. Whereas policies enacted during the period from 1968-2008 had more or less downward redistributive effects, from the standpoint that taxes were cut for top rate earners and trickle-down economic model was used to stimulate private sector job growth, post 2008 period promises to reverse that trend and re-

¹⁴²Krugman, P. (29 January, 2009). Health Care Now. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/30/opinion/30krugman.html?_r=1

¹⁴³ Pollin, R., Heintz, J., & Garrett-Peltier, H. (June, 2009). The Economic Benefits of Investing in Clean Energy. *The Center for American Progress*. Retrieved from http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/06/clean_energy.html; Krugman, Paul. (17 May, 2009). The Perfect, the Good, the Planet. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/18/opinion/18krugman.html>

initiate New Deal economic model where upward redistribution of wealth is once again enacted via tax increases on the top one percent of the earners in this country. If successful, the realignment theory suggests that this will translate into long term unifying party control for the Democrats, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 10

LONG SPANS IN UNIFIED PARTY CONTROL

As I have been briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, unified party control of the legislative and executive branches of government is extremely important and downright necessary from the logistical standpoint for any new major policy to be passed. Mayhew contended that realignment theory more or less necessitates long periods of one party control of the government as a precondition for being able to pass any meaningful major policy change. Jerome Clubb, William Flanigan and Nancy Zingale wrote that with the possible exception of external military threats, which unify even divided governments, consistent one party control of the federal government represents “a significant condition for achieving major policy innovations” (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 27). In theory, the long spans in one party control is crucial for policy making because it allows time for the new policies to be shaped and develop, for them to be essentially absorbed by the electorate and in the end “become embedded in the governmental and legal structures” (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 27). What’s more, the long periods of unified federal government ensures that there is little chance for the new programs and policies to be fundamentally changed or outright overturned by the opposition party.

History has shown that the unified control of the government by one of the two major political parties has been a fairly frequent occurrence after realignments. In the 1830s, the Democratic-Republican Party enjoyed ten years of unified control of the government. In the

aftermath of the critical elections in 1860 and 1896, the Republican Party's control of the federal legislature and the presidency lasted for fourteen years. As a result of the realignment in the early 1930s, the Democrats had unified control of the government from 1933 until the end of 1946, as well as from 1949 to the end of 1952, and then from 1961 until the end of 1968.

The last four decades can be described as exceptions this part of the theory, as divided government was more of a norm during that period. The Republicans, which dominated in the presidential elections from 1968 until 2004, only gained unified control of the government in the aftermath of the 2000 elections. The four and a half years of Republican control of the federal legislature and the presidency was actually the longest in those four decades.

The exact number of seats that the Democrats will gain or lose and at the same time whether they will retain their majorities in Congress and keep the presidency for any prolonged period of time, following the 2008 elections, is hard to predict, but the realignment theory and historical precedents offer us some insights on that particular topic. Generally speaking, statistics from the past elections have shown that the party that occupies the White House, almost always loses some seats in the midterm elections. Nate Silver – a statistician and political analyst, wrote in his August 15th 2009 article, that since World War II, an average of 17 seats in the House change parties in the election following a presidential victory. In 2010, he went on to say, “the Democrats have substantially more seats to defend than Republicans, particularly in the House. They appear to face a significant enthusiasm gap after having dominated virtually all close elections in 2006 and 2008. And the economy and health care are contingencies that could work either way, but which probably present more

downside risk to Democrats than upside over the next 12-18 months, particularly if some version of health care reform fails to pass.”¹⁴⁴

With that said, although it is theoretically possible for the Democrats to lose the control of the House of Representatives, such an event is unlikely due to the fact that Republican strengths are mainly concentrated in the South and Midwest – the areas where there are not a lot of seats for them to be picked up. Furthermore, with an average reelection rate of the House member is roughly about 94%, the Democrats can lose about 17 seats and still retain the majority.¹⁴⁵ Charlie Cook, in his September article for Cook Political Report, added to Silver’s analysis that among the things to watch in the months leading up to the 2010 elections is the numerous retirements of the Democratic legislators. He wrote that “perhaps the only thing that could turn what otherwise might be a bad election night for Democrats next year into a horrible night and cost them their majority [in the House] is a bunch of retirements in difficult districts.”¹⁴⁶ In difficult years, he continued, the open seats in competitive districts are the hardest for a party to hold on to. “Absent an incumbent with any personal reservoir of goodwill, parties are left with candidates who are less defined and more vulnerable to political tides, waves and undertows.”

When it comes to the Senate, Silver reported that the prospects for the Democrats to keep their majority in that chamber are quite good. However, he cautioned that “they are probably more likely now to lose seats in the chamber than to add to their majority, in spite of

¹⁴⁴ Silver, N. (15 August, 2009). Likely Voters and Unlikely Scenarios. *FiveThirtyEight*. Retrieved from <http://www.fivethirtyeight.com/2009/08/likely-voters-and-unlikely-scenarios.html>

¹⁴⁵ Center for Responsive Politics. (2009). *Big Picture: Reelection Rates Over the Years*. Retrieved from <http://www.opensecrets.org/bigpicture/reelect.php>

¹⁴⁶ Cook, C. (18 September, 2009). How High Will GOP Tide Rise? *The Cook Political Report*. Retrieved from <http://www.cookpolitical.com/node/4886>

the spate of Republican retirements in Ohio, Missouri and other states. In a wave-type election, a net loss of as many as 4-6 seats is conceivable.”¹⁴⁷ That means that if the Democrats lose seats in both the House and the Senate it will be that much harder for them to pass any meaningful legislation with smaller majorities, which is especially important on the Senate side, where procedural legislative barriers are broken with a 60 votes.

Having said that, chances are that the Democrats will continue to have unified control of the government until 2012 elections, what is going to happen beyond that is hard to prognosticate. The advantage that the Democrats have in terms of their appeal to the growing demographics, which was discussed in chapter eight, might allow them to prolong their majorities for years to come, especially if the newly enacted policies improve economic conditions in the country. Furthermore, congressional redistricting, which takes place after 2010 census might benefit the Democrats as well, especially in states where there is an upward trend relating to the population increase among the Hispanics. However, this notion will depend on how redistricting is actually done, as each state has its own rules concerning the redrawing of congressional districts. Sam Stein, of Huffington Post, noted that by some estimates, as many as 25-30 congressional seats can swing from one party to another, depending on how redistricting is completed.¹⁴⁸

Prolonged Democratic control of the government also depends on the policy proposals of the current and future governing coalitions, as was discussed in previous chapters on this thesis. Thus, if there are no visible and in some ways substantially

¹⁴⁷ Silver, N. (15 August, 2009). Likely Voters and Unlikely Scenarios. *FiveThirtyEight*. Retrieved from <http://www.fivethirtyeight.com/2009/08/likely-voters-and-unlikely-scenarios.html>

¹⁴⁸ Stein, S. (15 July, 2008). GOP Looks To Redistrict Itself Back Into Power. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/07/07/gop-looks-to-redistrict-i_n_110632.html

improvements in the current economic conditions, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq continues to escalate or some sort of political scandals surrounding the Democrats arise - that could potentially change the political landscape in favor of Republicans. The Democratic leaning electorate might not necessarily switch their allegiances to the GOP, but they might skip their participation in future electoral contests, as was observed in the 1970s and 1980s dealignment, when a lot of Democratic base simply abandoned the party and became politically inactive – a major reason for the 1960s realignment and the conservative policy swing during the period from 1969-2008. Therefore, the full extent of the compliance of this theoretical notion with the realignment theory will not be known for several decades from now.

CHAPTER 11

EFFECTIVE EXPRESSION OF THE VOTING PUBLIC

According to Mayhew, the effective and consequential expression of the voting public during realignment (to a far greater degree than non-realigning elections) is the core of the realignment theory. V.O. Key, who initially came up with the concept, wrote that "Elections that partake of this critical nature ... are the most striking instances of electoral interposition in the governing process" (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 29). Burnham added to the notion that approximately once in a generation, "the voting public made vitally important contribution to American political development" (Mayhew, 2002, pg. 29). This particular claim poses several questions: How has a critical election in question been different from preceding elections, in terms of voter viewpoints and interest levels? Has anything significant, historically or politically speaking, taken place on the election night, which perhaps has not happened for many years or has not happened before at all? Lastly, was there some sort of a clear and overarching message delivered by voters on a particular election day?

Unlike previously discussed parts of realignment theory, this particular concept is less empirical than others, but still can be measured nevertheless. Public expression has always been subjected to different interpretations by various social scientists. And yet, some overarching themes of an election can be extracted and used to measure this particular concept. Certainly, nobody would mistake the central theme and the overall importance of the

realignment of the late 1850s and the critical election of 1860. During that election, the electorate, although clearly divided between four different political parties, gave its majority endorsement to the Republican Party and its platform of preventing the secession of the Southern states and preserving the union. The subsequent reelection of Abraham Lincoln in 1864 and elections of fellow Republican Grant, in addition to enjoying big legislative majorities in both houses of Congress, allowed the GOP to continue its policies of anti-slavery and reconstruction in the United States. Arguably, though, no other election in that period from 1864 to 1896 rivaled the one in 1860 in terms of their importance.

The sweeping victories of FDR and the Congressional Democrats in the 1932 elections, who ran on a New Deal party platform, had similar effects. The electorate, which gave the Democrats control of the executive and legislative branches during that election, in effect rejected the Republican policies which caused the Great Depression and supported progressive new economic programs of recovery and reform. The three consecutive reelections of FDR confirmed the desire of the electorate to continue with the New Deal policies which began in 1933. Once again, it can be argued no other election during the period from 1934 to 1968 rivaled the importance of the one in 1932.

Arguably, the American electorate did not express itself effectively if the results of the critical election in 1968 are taken into consideration. The mostly divided federal government that emerged during the sixth party system following 1968 essentially muddled the clarity on this particular topic. However, the overriding themes of Law and Order, Cold War, as well as scaling back the social programs and important regulatory rules the federal government were still for the most part predominant from 1969 to 2008. Regnery, for instance, wrote that "the law and order theme resonated with conservatives and won Nixon

many votes. It also established the right as pro-law enforcement and the left as anticop” (Regnery, 2008, pg. 134). He also added that this Law and Order theme was very effective political issue for many future elections as it linked student demonstrators, black radicals and antiwar protesters, who used violence on people and property, to other criminals. Thus, starting from the Nixon Administration, the GOP was able to convince, for decades to come, working and middle-class Americans that there was little to no distinction between the some of the policies on the left and common criminals (Regnery, 2008, pg. 134). George H. W. Bush's "Willie Horton" ads, featured during the 1988 Presidential campaign, played on the theme of liberal left as anticop as it portrayed Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis – Democratic candidate for President as soft on crime.¹⁴⁹ Berman described that following Nixon's election, the opinion of the electorate on many government programs has shifted. He wrote that “as Reagan shifted gears to prepare for another run at the White House, it was becoming evident that many more people in the country now shared his opinion that government was the problem, not the solution” (Berman, 1998, pg. 149). Even Democrat Bill Clinton, in his 1992 Presidential campaign, promoted ending the “welfare as we know it” in addition to famously stating that “The era of big Government is over.” These examples arguably underscore the trends that the electorate leaned more or less towards conservative policies as not only the Republicans but many Democrats also used the “government is too big” notion in their campaigns and legislative proposals. Thus, the fact that seven out of ten Presidents during that time frame were Republicans can be interpreted as demonstrating that

¹⁴⁹ Museum of the Moving Image. (2008). *The Living Room Candidate. Presidential Campaign Commercials 1952-2008. 1988 Bush vs. Dukakis*. Retrieved from <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1988/willie-horton>

for the most part the majority of electorate effectively wanted to continue conservative policies of the GOP.

Although many similarities can be found between the recently concluded elections and critical elections of the past, the historic and perhaps once-in-a-lifetime nature of the 2008 elections can hardly be disputed. The voters, when presented with a clear choice between the Democratic or the Republican presidential candidate, went for the former by giving Barack Obama one of the largest victories in presidential elections in the last forty years. Obama's 365 Electoral Votes only trailed Bill Clinton's victories in 1992 and 1996 on the Democratic side.¹⁵⁰

But there was more to Obama's victory and this election as a whole than just pure election results. Richard Dunham wrote that in 2008 it became inevitable that American voters would make history during that election either the United States "would choose its first president of African ancestry or its first female vice president."¹⁵¹ Stan Greenberg, a pollster for the National Public Radio, proclaimed that after the election, no matter which party actually wins, "nothing's going to look the same." Carolyn Lochhead, of San Francisco Chronicle, added that the 2008 election represented an end of a 219-year tradition of two white males heading the major parties in the presidential elections. Obama's victory as the first minority U.S. president also meant that for the first time "a white-majority country has ever elected a nonwhite head of state," said Boston University historian Bruce Schulman in

¹⁵⁰ U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. (2008). *2008 Presidential Election Results*. Retrieved from <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/votes/index.html>; U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. *Historical Election Results: Electoral College Box Scores 1789-1996*. Retrieved from <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/scores.html>

¹⁵¹ Dunham, R. S. (2 November, 2008). What else makes this campaign unique. Election holds some rarities that go beyond race and gender. *Houston Chronicle*. Retrieved from <http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/chronicle/6090417.html>

the same article.¹⁵² In comparison, the equivalent would be, “of a Jamaican-descended prime minister of Britain, an Algerian-descended president of France, or a Turkish German chancellor. “That’s pretty astonishing in world historical terms,” added Schulman. Furthermore, Dunham identified 2008 presidential election as a rare display of generational contest, where candidates from the competing parties were 25 years apart in age. Also, he supposed that this election could potentially mark “the end of three decades of bitter post-Vietnam politics and with it the discussions of swift boats, draft evasion, National Guard records and anti-war bomb plots.”

More importantly though, with respect to the realignment theory, 2008 elections were in many ways the mandate elections. Of course the meaning of the word Mandate in the scope of political wins can be interpreted in many different ways. However, with thousands of news and magazine articles found on Google with search words of 2008 Elections, Obama and Mandate can serve as proof that at least in many journalistic circles, 2008 elections are considered as such. In one of those articles, David Paul Kuhn, of Politico, described Barack Obama’s 34-point advantage among the voters under 30 as “the most impressive youth mandate in modern American history.”¹⁵³ Mike Littwin, of the Rocky Mountain News, wrote that the results of the elections might even be called “a mandate as he [Obama] brings with him large Democratic majorities into Congress”¹⁵⁴ Vaughn Ververs, of CBS News, wrote that the sheer magnitude of the victory, the size of which has been unseen in presidential election

¹⁵² Lochhead, C. (2 November, 2008). Why Obama-McCain race deserves 'historic' label. *The San Francisco Gate*. Retrieved from <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/11/01/MN4N13RUA5.DTL&type=printable>

¹⁵³ Kuhn, D. P. (8 November, 2008). Obama has historic youth mandate. *Politico*. Retrieved from http://news.yahoo.com/s/politico/20081108/pl_politico/15441

¹⁵⁴ Littwin, M. (5 November, 2008). LITWIN: Obama’s victory redefines America. *The Rocky Mountain News*. Retrieved from <http://www.rockymountainnews.com/news/2008/nov/05/littwin-obamas-victory-redefines-02/>

in decades, is enough to be considered a mandate.¹⁵⁵ Lastly, Dan Balz of Washington Post proclaimed that on the presidential side, 2008 election “was a mandate to go in a different direction than President Bush has led the country for the last eight years. That's how President-elect Obama ran the campaign from the very beginning. And that's how he won the campaign.”¹⁵⁶ With those words, Dan Balz perhaps makes the best case from the stand point of realignment theory that the voting public clearly expressed its desire for a Change to the country's direction and the people voted in big numbers for a candidate who promised to bring them that Change.

In the end, the historic firsts in the American political system were combined with the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, in addition to the continuing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. McCarthy wrote that “the historic nature of the contest combined with grave problems facing the nation have raised interest in this election as much as any in recent years.” Whether any elections in the next four decades can top this once in-a-life-time combination of events in one single election is hard to predict. The realignment theory, however, forecasts that the odds of that kind of occurrence taking place in the near future are very slim.

¹⁵⁵ Ververs, V. (5 November, 2008). A Mandate For Change. *CBS News*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/11/05/politics/main4572553.shtml>

¹⁵⁶ MSNBC. (11 November, 2008). *Transcript: '1600 Pennsylvania Avenue' for Tuesday, November 11, 2008*. Retrieved from <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/27699682/>

CHAPTER 12

CONCLUSION

Throughout this thesis, a great deal of data has been presented and for the most part it supports the overall notion that there are early signs that point to electoral realignment taking place between 2005 through 2008. The initial indicators also point towards the possibility that the 2008 elections, especially on the presidential level, were critical from the standpoint of realignment theory, as they represented not only a turnaround from the policies of the last forty years but also symbolized a change in terms of the overall direction of this country on the domestic and foreign policy fronts. In order to prove this preliminary notion, I have utilized a fifteen claim testing method which was developed by David Mayhew.

In the second chapter, I brought forth historical and empirical evidence that showed the cyclical nature of American elections. The data, discovered by realignment theorists, illustrated that during each 30 to 40 year cycles, one political party more or less dominated the electoral landscape of this country. In between cycles, a transition period took place which represented a period of realignment. In the end, the realignment phase culminated with a critical election, which represented a start of another cycle in American politics. The compiled data in that chapter ultimately showcased the cyclical nature and consistent periodicity of realignments, thus further proving the first claim of the Mayhew's testing method.

In the third chapter, I have showcased the tension building aspect of the realignment theory in the context of the 2006 and 2008 elections. By utilizing primary and secondary data analysis of public opinion polls, I illustrated growing frustration of the majority of the electorate during the period from 2005 -2008. The dissatisfaction with the overall direction of the country as well as the war in Iraq and economic instability were the primary reasons for the formation of the so called First Motor. I also made a historical comparison to prior realigning periods to further demonstrate the conformity of the 2006 and 2008 elections to the 2nd claim of Mayhew's theoretical model.

In chapter 4, I explored the trends of the Party Identification numbers for the last four years and how these recent tendencies connected with the realignment theory. By employing a number of charts and graphs, as well as additional public opinion surveys, I showed that there was fundamental swing in Party ID statistics during the period from 2005 to 2008 towards the Democrats. The apparent weakening of the identification numbers for GOP and strengthening numbers for the Democrats in 2008 confirmed the viability of the Second Motor claim in relation to the 2008 elections.

In chapter 5, the investigation of the voter turnout numbers in the 2008 and historical comparison of them to the prior critical elections revealed that while the overall increase in voter participation was relatively modest, it was mainly due to the low levels of excitement among the GOP voters which directly translated into decreased participation among the Republicans. On the other hand, the significant increase in numbers among the Democratic voters, who were arguably very excited about the election, and Independents directly lead to the highest percentage in total voter participation in the last forty years. Thus, the theoretical

notion that during realignment and critical elections the voter turnout is unusually high was mainly proven to be correct for the 2008.

In chapter 6, I have explored the effects of the nomination battles for the two major political parties within the realignment theory. The evidence has shown that on the Democratic side some factional divisions, which originated during the primaries, spilled over into the party convention. On the Republican side, the potential for the turmoil during the convention was quite high as well. Overall, if compared to the prior presidential nominating years in the last four decades, in 2008 the process was by far the most eventful and unpredictable. In the end, the factional divisions which were observed during the primaries and at the party conventions represented a philosophical and generational divide of the electorate. This divide played itself out during the general elections and thus confirming at least in part the relationship between realignments and turmoil during the conventions.

In chapter 7, I have tested the theoretical notion that shortly before or during realignments, independent or third parties tend to perform quite well at the election polls. My research showed that although third party candidates did quite well during the presidential elections in 1992, 1996 and even in 2000, the performance of these parties in 2004 and 2008 was quite dismal. Both the Republicans and the Democrats were able to consolidate their support within the electorate, and those voters who were unhappy with the presidential nominees ended up skipping voting for the president all together, as oppose to voting for a minor party candidate. Therefore, the third party claim of Mayhew did not play itself out in the 2008 elections or during the realignment period from 2004-2008.

In chapter 8, I have investigated three distinct and interdependent claims of polarization of electorate, new voter cleavage and national implications on congressional

racism. The research showed that in 2008, the voters were as polarized as their elective representatives and that voter cleavage although did not dramatically change in its core composition, it was still altered by the historical standards in terms of rapidly swelling rolls of the Democratic leaning electorate. Lastly, I discovered that in many House of Representative races, local issues were put on the backburner and national issues of economy, two wars and healthcare came to the forefront.

In chapters 9 and 10, I have discussed future implications of the Democratic victories in on the presidential and congressional levels, in terms of the changes and long term effects on the governmental policies and how that might affect a long term potential of unified party control. The data presented in these chapters pointed towards significant upward redistributive changes which in theory suppose to rival the 1930s New Deal. If those policy changes do indeed take place, history shows that the Democrats have a good chance of holding on to their majorities and therefore have a long period of unifying control of the government. Still, some of the data and conclusions that were brought forth in those chapters are approximate and therefore any changes within these two Mayhew claims can in down the road can affect the overall interpretation of the realignment case.

In chapter 11, I found enough evidence that showed these 2008 elections to be historic on many levels and that at this point of time, can be considered as monumental as 1860 Republican takeover and the election of Lincoln and 1932 Democratic takeover and election of FDR. History of course will judge whether indeed the historic label can be appropriately applied to the last year's political events. Therefore, based on the results of the Mayhew's 15 point testing metric, I believe that there are enough initial indicators to

pronounce that the 2008 elections were critical in nature and they represented culmination of realignment period from approximately 2005-2008.

On a pure historic level, last year's elections in this country represented what some might call political, cultural and sociological paradigm shifts. Adam Nagorney, of the New York Times, wrote that the conventional wisdom of the political campaigns has been completely reshaped during the 2008 primary and general elections.¹⁵⁷ He suggested that the rules on how to reach voters, fundraise, as well as organize supporters have radically changed. Furthermore, internet blogs became a major communication tool not just for the campaigns but also for the traditional mainstream media – something, Nagorney noted, did not exist four years ago. Mark McKinnon, a senior adviser to President George W. Bush's campaigns in 2000 and 2004, told Nagorney that in 2008, both the Democratic and the Republican presidential campaigns “leveraged the Internet in ways never imagined. The year we went to warp speed. The year the paradigm got turned upside down and truly became bottom up instead of top down.”

Lincoln Mitchell, of the Huffington Post, also noted paradigm shifts in his post-election column. He wrote that Obama's victory will force political strategists, pundits and other sociological observers to completely rethink many assumptions regarding the presidential elections. For instance, we can no longer proclaim that this country is not ready for an African-American president, as Obama's election put an end to that line of thinking. Additionally, Hillary Clinton's primary campaign, though not necessarily successful,

¹⁵⁷ Nagourney, A. (3 November, 2008). The '08 Campaign: Sea Change for Politics as We Know It. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/04/us/politics/04memo.html>

“probably moved us closer to electing a woman president. Obama's victory also opens the doors for other non-white candidates, from both parties.”¹⁵⁸

A great number of scholars put forth similar opinions on the subject of 2008 elections and the apparent paradigm shifts. For instance, Douglas Brinkley, professor of history at Rice University, noted comparable patterns when he called 2008 elections as "Monumental ... a major shift in the zeitgeist of our times."¹⁵⁹ Additionally, James McPherson, professor emeritus of history at Princeton University, for his part, called Obama's victory a “historic turning point ... an exclamation point of major proportions to the civil rights movement that goes back to the 1950s.”¹⁶⁰ Doris Goodwin, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author, historian and political commentator, wrote that “the racial milestone will be much larger than we've even imagined in the course of these last couple of years,” and that compared to other historical events associated with race relations in this country, the concept of an African-American holding the nation's highest office “is just enormous,” she said.¹⁶¹ Therefore, alongside the empirical evidence and data that was presented in this thesis, the apparent confirmation of paradigm shifts from the historical and sociological point of view, serves as further prove of the apparent realignment.

In conclusion, I believe it would be appropriate to consider some changes to the process of examination of realignments and the theory itself. Throughout my entire research, I have read countless number of books, journal entrees as well as newspaper and magazine

¹⁵⁸ Mitchell, L. (10 December, 2008). The 2008 Elections and What We Thought We Knew. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lincoln-mitchell/the-2008-elections-and-wh_b_150007.html

¹⁵⁹ Lewan, T. (9 November, 2008). Historians, too, call Obama victory 'monumental'. *The USA Today*. Retrieved from http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/election2008/2008-11-09-obama-history_N.htm

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

articles, and during that process I have found that many scholars and journalists tend to create or use different definitions of what constitutes a realignment and how do we measure or scientifically prove that it actually took place, which in turn creates plenty of confusion. I took the testing approach of David Mayhew because I believed it to be more or less straight forward and easy to replicate. However, that does not mean that Mayhew's testing method was entirely correct, and therefore future development of a better assessment model might be necessary. Additionally, it might be wise also to narrow down the exact definition of realignment and all the scientific terms relating to it.

CHAPTER 13

EPILOGUE

Several months have gone by since the completion of the major portions of this thesis and the political environment in this country has changed to the point where some realignment related questions need to be readdressed. Since the congressional recess in late August, the public and political discourse in this country has become even more divisive than it has ever been, especially in relation to President Obama and his political agenda. The healthcare reform, which has become the primary objective of the Obama administration, has been moving rather slowly. The debate on the healthcare legislation has not only polarized the electorate but subsequently the Congress as well and as of November, 2009, its once certain passage is no longer assured. To illustrate the divisiveness, we only need to look at the footage of the speeches and remarks made by the citizens during the townhall meetings with their respective representatives, and subsequently by those representatives themselves on the floor of Congress. The rather baseless rumors of the so called Death Panels, that medical care will be rationed or that private insurance will be outlawed, have completely poisoned the legitimate healthcare debate.¹⁶² Although the House of Representatives passed their own version

of the Healthcare bill with the final vote tally of 220-215, they were only able to achieve that by including a stern anti-abortion amendment that would severely restrict women's ability to purchase abortion coverage insurance on the newly proposed healthcare exchange.¹⁶³ On the Senate side, the Finance and HELP (Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions) committees have passed their own versions of the healthcare bills and a combined bill is set to be debated in December, 2009. However, with four of the most conservative members in the Democratic caucus in the Senate all but set to filibuster the bill, the chances of passage of the final legislation in the Senate are not necessarily high.¹⁶⁴

Coupled with the seeming inability thus far to pass healthcare reform and stop continuing losses in hundreds of thousands every month on the job market, the public opinion polls showed dissatisfaction of the electorate with the Democratic led Congress and President Obama. For instance, Obama's approval rating, which once was as high as 67%, is now down to about 53% as of November 3, 2009 Gallup poll. That puts him second from the last in terms of job approval rank of all the presidents

¹⁶² False rumor: Health care proposals would create government-sponsored "death panels" to decide which patients were worthy of living. Rutenberg, J. & Calmes, J. (13 August, 2009). False 'Death Panel' Rumor Has Some Familiar Roots. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/14/health/policy/14panel.html>; Jackson, B., Henig, J., Novak, V., & Robertson, L. (14 August, 2009). Seven Falsehoods About Health Care. *FactCheck*. Retrieved from <http://www.factcheck.org/2009/08/seven-falsehoods-about-health-care/>

¹⁶³ Grim, R., Stein, S., Shapiro, L., & Pitney, N. (8 November, 2009). House Health Care Vote: Breaking Updates. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/11/07/house-health-care-vote-br_n_349468.html

¹⁶⁴ Whitesides, J. (20 November, 2009). Moderate Democrat boosts Senate health bill. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSN1812587720091120>

elected since the World War II.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, the electorate apparently soured on the Congressional Democrats as well, with Gallup showing 48%-44% advantage for the Republicans over the Democrats in the 2010 Generic Congressional Ballot poll. To put it in perspective, that 4 percent advantage for the GOP represents a 10 point turnaround in a span of roughly four months.¹⁶⁶

The dissatisfaction of the electorate with the current state of affairs, especially on the economic front, was displayed during the 2009 elections in the states of Virginia and New Jersey. In an ABC News post election story, it was reported that exit polls showed that over 80% of the voters in those states were worried about the economic direction of the country.¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, the report also showed that those voters who were particularly discontent about the economic conditions of the country heavily favored the Republican candidates, which directly led to the GOP capturing both governor races. Thus, it would be fair to conclude that President Obama and the Democratic Party potentially faces a number of challenges for the next year's midterm elections, if economic conditions in this country do not improve. In turn, this puts a big question mark on the earlier realignment notion of long term party control,

¹⁶⁵ Newport, F. (3 November, 2009). One Year After Election, Americans Less Sure About Obama. *Gallup*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/124085/One-Year-Election-Americans-Less-Sure-Obama.aspx>

¹⁶⁶ Jones, J. M. (11 November, 2009). Republicans Edge Ahead of Democrats in 2010 Vote. *Gallup*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/124226/Republicans-Edge-Ahead-Democrats-2010-Vote.aspx>

¹⁶⁷ Langer, G. (3 November, 2009). '09 Exit Polls: Voters Wary of Economy, Obama Not a Factor. Discontent Voters Heavily Favored Republicans in VA, NJ Races. *ABC News*. Retrieved from <http://abcnews.go.com/PollingUnit/Politics/election-2009-virginia-jersey-exit-polls-obama-economy/story?id=8984551>

as it is not out of the realms of possibility that Republicans take over at least one legislative chamber in Congress.

Although the political environment for the Democrats has certainly worsened in just over a year, the GOP's problems have not necessarily gone away. The internal strife between the so called Tea-Party wing¹⁶⁸ and the mainstream wing of the Republican Party has grown rather exponentially. In fact, the Democratic win in the special election in New York's 23rd Congressional district in last month's elections is mostly contributed to the internal battle between a Republican and a Conservative Party candidate. Moreover, David Frum wrote that "the Republican fratricide in the Nov. 3 special election in upstate New York may prove just an opening round of an even more spectacular bloodbath in Florida in 2010," where current Governor Charlie Crist is being challenged by the former Speaker of the Florida House Marco Rubio, mainly because of Crist's endorsement and campaigning for the Obama stimulus, whereas Rubio opposed it.¹⁶⁹ In another example, Lynsi Burton, of Houston Chronicle, reported that there are at least five state races in Texas where Republicans are being challenged by the conservative Tea Party candidates.¹⁷⁰ To add to that, a recently published so-called GOP purity platform, introduced by one of the

¹⁶⁸ Tea Party wing of the Republican Party is mostly composed of a group of the electorate who are fiscally conservative, free marketers and are for small government. Teo, D. (22 November, 2009). Tea Parties Organizing, Training For 2010 Under The Radar. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dawn-teo/tea-party-2010-gop-revolt_b_367096.html

¹⁶⁹ Frum, D. (15 November, 2009). Republicans heading for a bloodbath in Florida. *CNN*. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/2009/OPINION/11/15/frum.gop.florida.crist.rubio.battle/>

¹⁷⁰ Burton, L. (16 November, 2009). GOP's latest foes hail from Tea Party. Republicans in 5 state races may find new fights on their right flanks. *The Houston Chronicle*. Retrieved from <http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/chronicle/6722358.html>

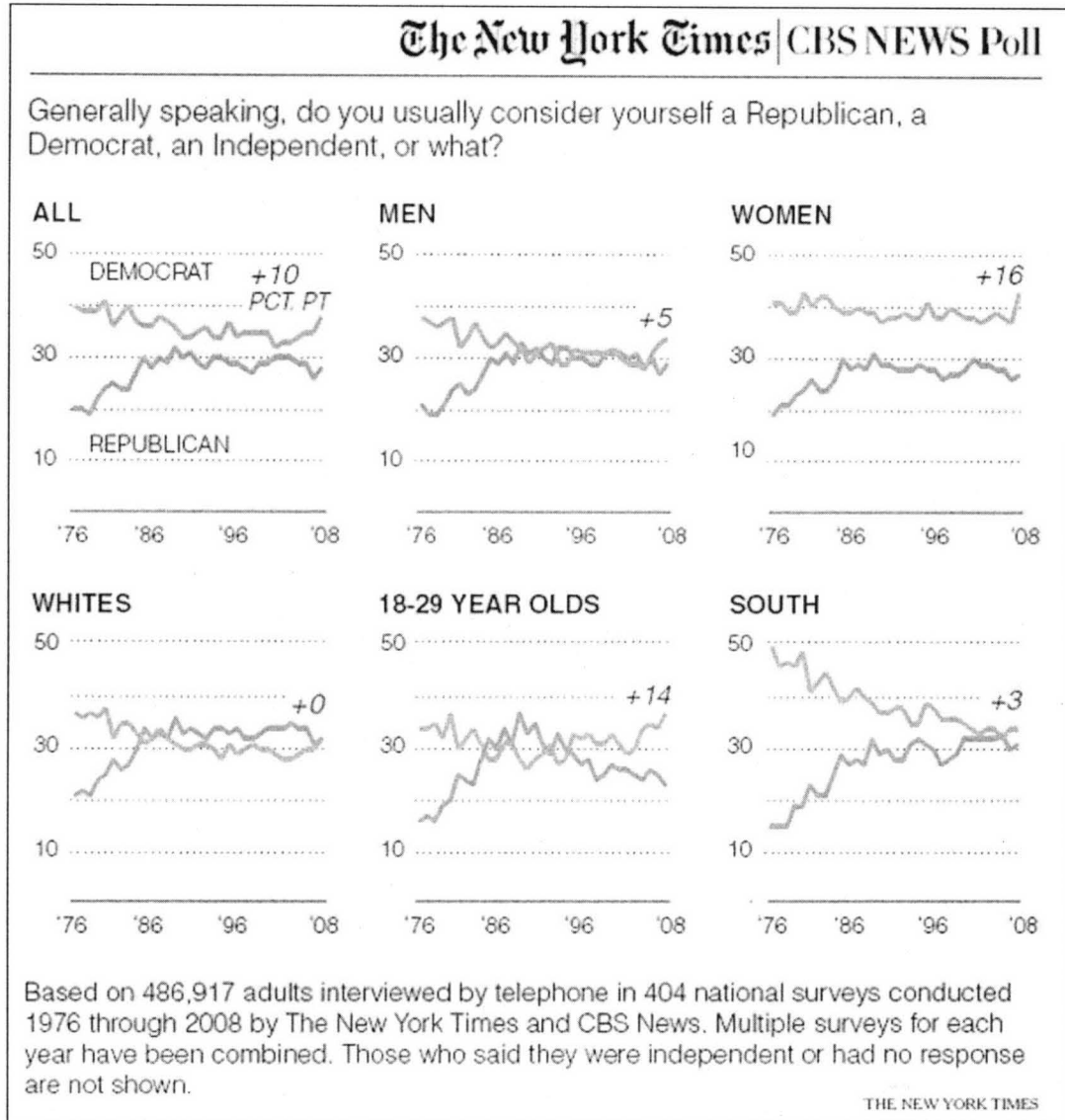
Republican National Committee members, which if implemented would restrict party funding for those who don't adhere to the 7 of 10 rules of the party, promises to divide the GOP even more. Mark McKinnon, former GOP strategist, thinks that this policy will ultimately doom Republican comeback and will shrink the party's ranks even more.¹⁷¹

In the end, it appears that both political parties face big challenges in the upcoming 2010 elections. Democrats, who are in power, will need to show the voters enough progress on the economic front in order for to minimize losses in the next year's elections. GOP, on the other hand, will need to stop internal infighting in order to try to get back to power. From the realignment standpoint, 2010 elections will give us a better insight into whether or not the realignment tendencies, especially those relating to the long term unified party control and the effects of the new governmental policies, will indeed hold as it was earlier proposed in this thesis.

¹⁷¹ McKinnon, M. (24 November, 2009). The GOP's Blacklist. *The Daily Beast*. Retrieved from <http://www.thedailybeast.com/blogs-and-stories/2009-11-24/the-gops-blacklist/?cid=hp:blogunit1>

APPENDIX 1A

Figure 4.1. Party Identification Gap from 1976 to 2008.



Source: Connelly, M. (28 February, 2009). Ailing G.O.P. Risks Losing a Generation. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/01/weekinreview/01connelly.html>

APPENDIX 2A

Table 4.1. State by State changes in Party Identification from 1993 to 2002.

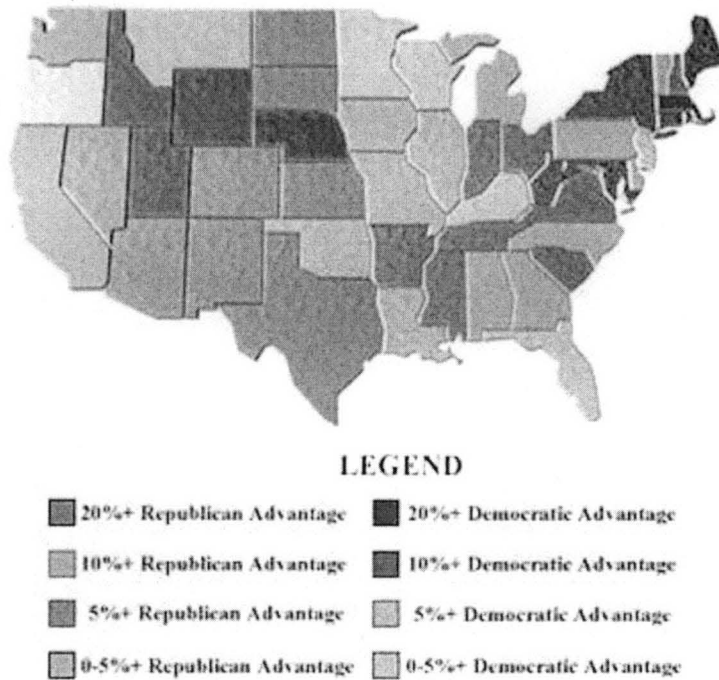
Changes in Partisan Identification From 1993 to 2002

State	% Republican/ Lean Republican		% Democrat/ Lean Democrat		Difference between Rep and Dem		Change
	2002	1993	2002	1993	2002	1993	
Utah	63.6	49.0	28.6	39.2	35.0	9.8	25.2
Mississippi	54.2	42.7	37.6	50.0	16.6	-7.3	23.9
Louisiana	42.4	32.4	48.5	62.4	-6.1	-30.0	23.9
Wyoming	66.6	52.0	24.5	33.5	42.1	18.5	23.6
Minnesota	44.7	32.1	46.4	55.1	-1.7	-23.0	21.4
Missouri	46.6	34.0	44.8	51.7	1.8	-17.7	19.5
Ohio	49.1	39.6	40.6	49.6	8.5	-10.0	18.5
Oklahoma	48.1	37.9	47.4	55.5	0.7	-17.6	18.2
Texas	52.4	42.8	39.6	48.2	12.8	-5.4	18.1
Alabama	48.7	38.2	44.0	50.9	4.7	-12.7	17.4
Georgia	46.6	38.8	44.6	53.8	2.0	-15.0	17.0
Idaho	60.1	48.8	31.3	36.3	28.8	12.5	16.4
Tennessee	49.5	41.1	41.5	48.6	8.0	-7.5	15.5
South Dakota	53.2	48.4	38.0	46.6	15.2	1.8	13.4
Kentucky	46.2	39.8	47.3	54.2	-1.1	-14.4	13.3
Iowa	44.0	36.2	43.8	47.6	0.2	-11.4	11.6
Nebraska	55.7	51.2	34.4	41.1	21.3	10.1	11.2
Colorado	49.9	45.5	39.5	45.8	10.4	-0.3	10.7
Wisconsin	43.6	36.1	46.6	49.7	-3.0	-13.6	10.6
West Virginia	38.3	33.8	50.8	56.9	-12.5	-23.1	10.6
Arizona	54.0	49.4	36.8	42.5	17.2	6.9	10.4
Delaware	42.8	37.0	48.4	52.5	-5.6	-15.5	9.8
Illinois	42.4	37.8	47.7	52.2	-5.3	-14.4	9.1
Michigan	44.4	38.6	43.7	47.0	0.7	-8.4	9.1
North Carolina	48.1	43.7	44.6	49.2	3.5	-5.5	9.0
South Carolina	50.0	45.9	40.4	45.3	9.6	0.6	9.0
Virginia	48.7	43.5	41.2	44.8	7.5	-1.3	8.8
North Dakota	49.3	45.7	36.6	41.5	12.7	4.2	8.5
New Mexico	48.7	42.4	42.5	44.3	6.2	-1.9	8.1
Indiana	49.3	46.1	39.3	43.3	10.0	2.8	7.2
California	42.6	39.8	49.4	51.9	-6.8	-12.1	5.3
New Hampshire	48.1	43.4	41.2	41.2	6.9	2.2	4.7
Montana	44.3	40.1	41.6	41.1	2.7	-1.0	3.7
Rhode Island	35.9	35.3	50.5	53.3	-14.6	-18.0	3.4
Pennsylvania	43.5	41.5	48.4	49.8	-4.9	-8.3	3.3
New York	38.7	36.5	51.5	52.4	-12.8	-15.9	3.1
Oregon	43.1	43.1	46.1	48.4	-3.0	-5.3	2.3
Florida	45.8	43.2	46.2	44.9	-0.4	-1.7	1.4
Massachusetts	33.7	31.8	54.9	54.4	-21.2	-22.6	1.2
Washington	40.1	40.4	45.4	46.2	-5.3	-5.8	0.5
Maryland	36.1	35.6	56.1	55.8	-20.0	-20.2	0.3
Nevada	48.3	49.6	39.8	39.9	8.5	9.7	-1.2
Arkansas	36.8	38.7	53.8	52.7	-17.0	-14.0	-3.0
Vermont	45.1	44.3	44.6	40.0	0.5	4.3	-3.8
Kansas	51.4	50.7	40.6	35.5	10.8	15.2	-4.3
Connecticut	36.3	36.5	49.3	46.3	-13.0	-7.8	-5.3
New Jersey	43.1	45.1	47.4	42.1	-4.3	3.0	-7.2
Maine	37.6	41.8	48.6	45.0	-11.0	-3.2	-7.8
District of Columbia	13.1	21.9	85.2	69.3	-72.1	-47.4	-24.7

Source: Jones, J. M. (7 January, 2003). Special Report: State-by-State Analysis Reveals Republican Shift. *Gallup*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/7543/Special-Report-StatebyState-Analysis-Reveals-Republican-Shift.aspx>

APPENDIX 3A

Figure 4.3. 2002 Postelection State by State map representing Republican advantage in Party Identification.



Source: Jones, J. M. (7 January, 2003). Special Report: State-by-State Analysis Reveals Republican Shift. *Gallup*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/7543/Special-Report-StatebyState-Analysis-Reveals-Republican-Shift.aspx>

APPENDIX 4A

Table 4.2. State by State shift of the electoral support towards the Democrats.

State	Dem.	Independent	Rep.	Advantage	Number
	+ Lean	(non-	+ Lean	(% Dem.	of
		leaning)		minus	Inter-
				% Rep.)	views
	%	%	%	%	
District of Columbia	80.3	1.5	18.2	62.1	80
Rhode Island	61.1	11.7	27.2	33.9	156
Delaware	63.3	6.6	30.1	33.2	112
Massachusetts	56.7	9.2	34.1	22.6	976
Connecticut	55.5	10.1	34.4	21.1	533
New York	55.2	8.1	36.7	18.5	2361
New Jersey	53.7	8.7	37.5	16.2	1060
Oregon	53.5	7.6	38.9	14.6	747
New Hampshire	52.7	8.4	38.9	13.8	268
West Virginia	53.2	6.7	40.2	13	370
Maryland	52.9	6.8	40.4	12.5	714
Nevada	52	8.2	39.7	12.3	339
Michigan	52	7.9	40.1	11.9	1354
Maine	49.6	12.6	37.8	11.8	314
Washington	49.8	12	38.2	11.6	1112
Arkansas	51.8	7.7	40.5	11.3	462
Minnesota	51	8.5	40.5	10.5	866
Illinois	51.8	6.4	41.8	10	1387
California	50.9	7.4	41.7	9.2	4172
Kentucky	51.6	5.5	42.9	8.7	744
Missouri	50	8.3	41.7	8.3	938
New Mexico	49.7	8.4	41.9	7.8	317
Ohio	49.4	8.2	42.4	7	1791
Iowa	49.3	7.6	43.1	6.2	522
Louisiana	49.8	6.6	43.6	6.2	548
Vermont	46.6	11.6	41.9	4.7	140
Wisconsin	47.1	10	42.9	4.2	878
Pennsylvania	48	7.5	44.5	3.5	2374
Colorado	47.2	8.9	43.9	3.3	880
North Carolina	47	7.2	45.7	1.3	1430
Florida	46.9	7.5	45.6	1.3	2350
Virginia	46.2	8	45.8	0.4	1155
Montana	41.8	16.6	41.6	0.2	211

Tennessee	46.7	6.5	46.8	0	893
Oklahoma	45.9	6.5	47.6	-1.7	624
Alabama	44.5	7.9	47.7	-3.2	665
Georgia	44.3	7.5	48.2	-3.9	1125
Arizona	43.3	8.8	47.8	-4.5	842
South Dakota	41.1	11.8	47.1	-6	112
Indiana	41.1	9.8	49.2	-8.1	955
Mississippi	40	9.4	50.7	-10.7	374
Kansas	39.7	7.7	52.6	-12.9	430
South Carolina	38.3	8.8	52.9	-14.6	592
Texas	37.6	9	53.5	-15.9	2574
Idaho	36.7	10.1	53.2	-16.5	308
North Dakota	33.8	10.1	56.1	-22.3	95
Nebraska	33.1	10	56.9	-23.8	264
Wyoming	30.6	9.2	60.2	-29.6	109
Utah	30.9	8.3	60.8	-29.9	364

Source: Jones, Jeffrey M. (23 January, 2006). Special Report: Many States Shift Democratic During 2005. *Gallup*. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/21004/Special-Report-Many-States-Shift-Democratic-During-2005.aspx>

APPENDIX 5A

Table 4.3. State by state Democratic Party advantage in Party Identification in 2007.

State	Dem./	Ind.	Rep./	Dem. -
	Lean	(no	Lean	
	Dem.	lean)	Rep.	Rep. Adv
	%	%	%	%
Rhode Island	66	8	26	40
Vermont	64	9	27	37
Massachusetts	63	8	29	34
Connecticut	61	11	29	32
Arkansas	60	6	34	26
Maine	58	10	32	26
New York	58	8	34	24
West Virginia	58	8	34	24
Maryland	58	7	35	23
New Hampshire	55	12	33	22
Missouri	55	8	37	18
Washington	54	10	36	18
Michigan	52	11	37	15
Ohio	53	8	39	15
New Jersey	52	10	38	14
Illinois	52	9	39	13
Kentucky	54	6	41	13
New Mexico	54	5	41	13
Minnesota	53	6	41	12
California	51	8	40	11
Florida	51	9	40	11
Iowa	51	10	40	11
North Carolina	52	7	41	11
Oregon	49	12	39	10
Virginia	51	8	41	10
Nevada	48	12	40	8

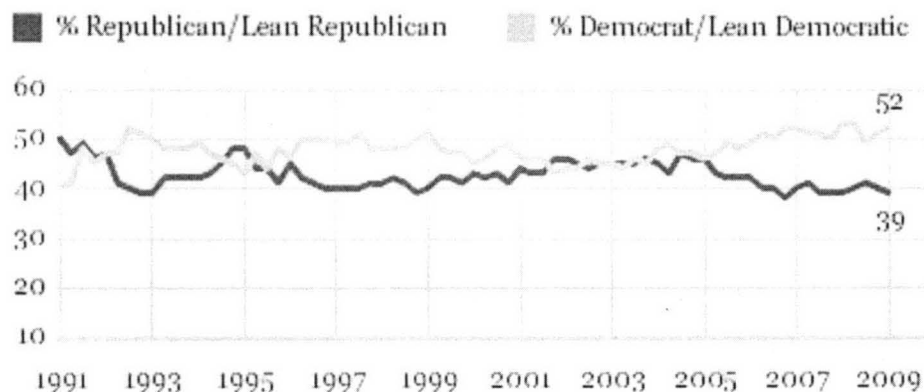
Pennsylvania	50	9	42	8
Indiana	49	10	42	7
Oklahoma	50	7	43	7
Arizona	50	6	44	6
Wisconsin	49	9	42	6
Montana	47	11	42	5
Georgia	48	8	44	4
Kansas	48	8	44	4
Alabama	49	5	46	3
Louisiana	47	10	44	3
Tennessee	47	9	44	3
Colorado	47	7	46	1
Mississippi	44	7	49	-5
South Dakota	41	11	48	-7
South Carolina	44	6	50	-7
Texas	42	8	50	-8
Nebraska	37	9	55	-18
Idaho	35	11	54	-19
Utah	33	6	62	-29

Source: Jones, J. M. (30 January, 2007). Democratic Edge in Partisanship in 2006 Evident at National, State Levels. *Gallup*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/26308/Democratic-Edge-Partisanship-2006-Evident-National-State-Levels.aspx>

APPENDIX 6A

Figure 4.4. Trend of changes in Party Identification, including leaners from 1991-2009.

Leaned Party Identification, Average by Quarter, 1991-2009
Gallup Polls

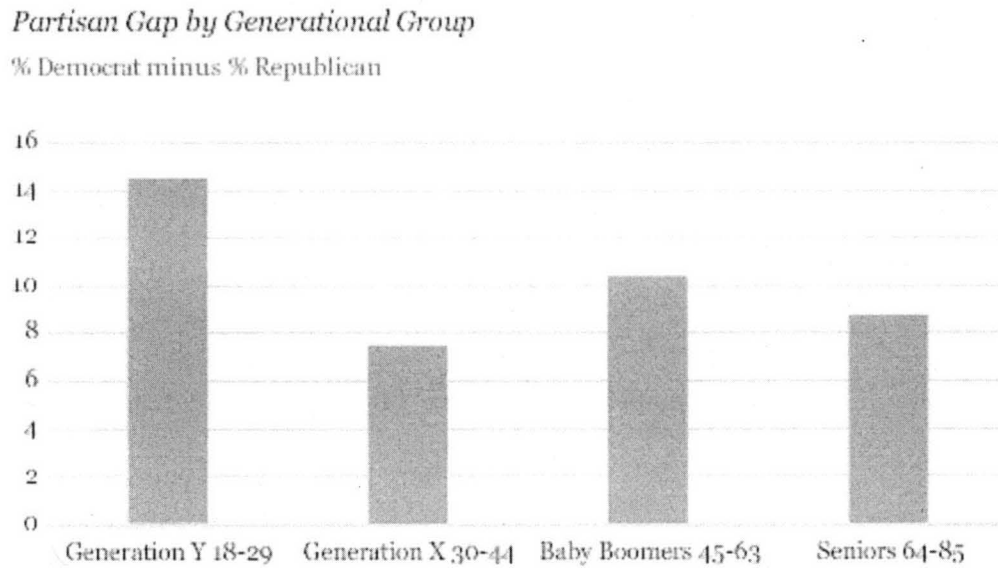


GALLUP POLL

Source: Jones, J. M. (30 April, 2009). Democrats Maintain Seven-Point Advantage in Party ID. Gallup. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/118084/Democrats-Maintain-Seven-Point-Advantage-Party.aspx>

APPENDIX 7A

Figure 4.5. Partisan Gap by Generational Group.



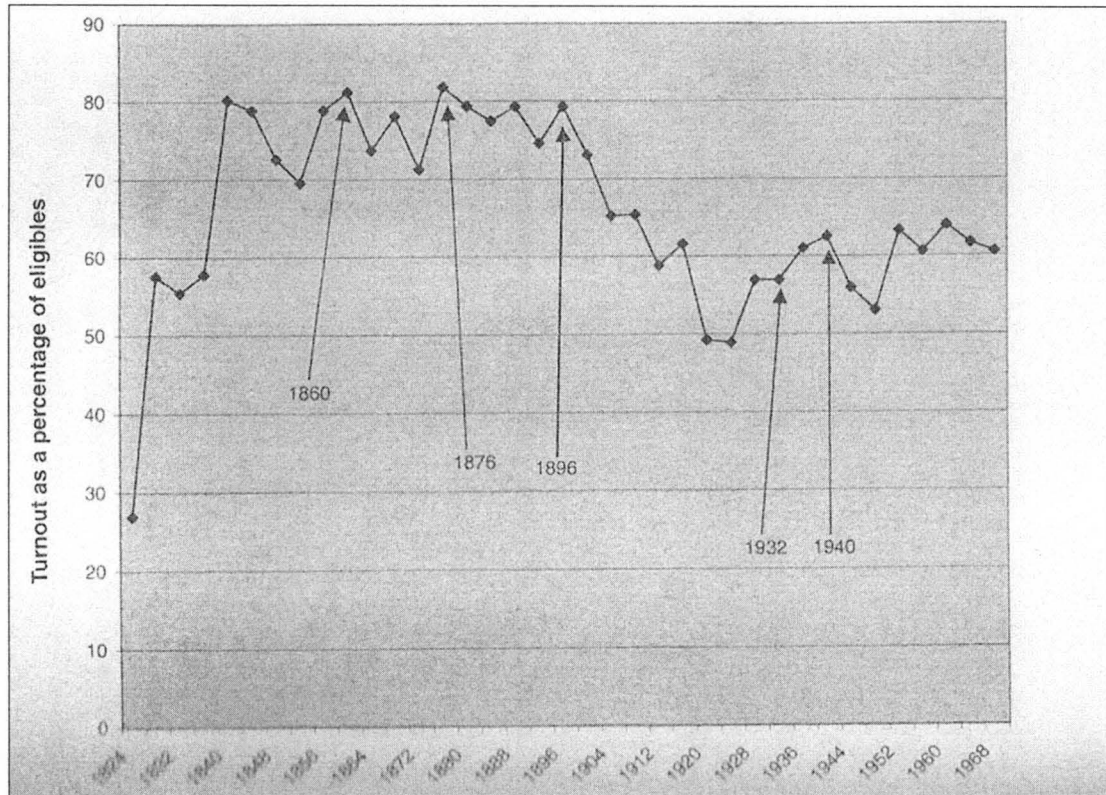
Gallup Poll Daily tracking, Jan. 2-May 5, 2009

GALLUP POLL

Source: Newport, F. (8 May, 2009). Democrats Do Best Among Generation Y and Baby Boomers. *Gallup*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/118285/Democrats-Best-Among-Generation-Baby-Boomers.aspx?CSTS=alert>

APPENDIX 1B

Figure 5.1. Voter turnout in U.S. elections from 1824-1968.



Source: Mayhew, D. R. *Electoral Realignments: A Critique of an American Genre*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

APPENDIX 2B

Table 5.1. 2008 General Election Voter Registration Statistics in the U.S.

State	VEP 2008 Voter Registration Rate	2008 Total Voter Registration	Voting Eligible Population	Change '04 to '08
United States	87.90%	186,983,927	212,720,027	5.40%
Alabama	88.60%	3,010,638	3,398,289	5.90%
Alaska	103.80%	495,731	477,763	4.40%
Arizona	84.00%	3,441,141	4,096,006	18.80%
Arkansas	82.80%	1,684,240	2,033,146	-0.10%
California	78.70%	17,304,091	21,993,429	4.50%
Colorado	93.30%	3,210,258	3,441,907	3.10%
Connecticut	85.30%	2,091,980	2,451,296	3.90%
Delaware	96.60%	601,348	622,664	9.10%
District of Columbia	97.40%	426,761	438,201	11.20%
Florida	90.50%	11,247,634	12,426,633	9.20%
Georgia	90.10%	5,755,750	6,390,590	16.20%
Hawaii	76.90%	691,356	898,922	6.80%
Idaho	83.30%	861,869	1,034,402	8.00%
Illinois	87.90%	7,732,908	8,794,625	3.10%
Indiana	97.40%	4,513,615	4,634,261	5.10%
Iowa	99.60%	2,190,158	2,199,849	11.10%
Kansas	88.40%	1,749,759	1,978,713	3.30%
Kentucky	92.10%	2,906,809	3,156,794	4.00%
Louisiana	93.30%	2,945,618	3,158,676	0.80%
Maine	104.30%	1,068,461	1,024,699	4.30%
Maryland	88.30%	3,432,645	3,888,726	11.80%
Massachusetts	90.70%	4,220,488	4,652,749	3.00%
Michigan	102.90%	7,470,764	7,263,250	4.30%
Minnesota	100.50%	3,742,121	3,721,943	5.10%

Mississippi	89.70%	1,895,583	2,114,108	-1.40%
Missouri	97.90%	4,205,774	4,296,592	0.30%
Montana	90.10%	668,085	741,538	4.60%
Nebraska	90.50%	1,157,034	1,278,980	-0.30%
Nevada	87.50%	1,446,425	1,652,846	35.00%
New Hampshire	96.10%	958,528	997,247	12.00%
New Jersey	92.40%	5,401,528	5,844,477	7.90%
New Mexico	89.30%	1,229,163	1,376,025	11.20%
New York	91.30%	12,031,312	13,183,464	1.60%
North Carolina	95.10%	6,233,330	6,551,412	12.80%
North Dakota	100.00%	486,871	486,871	0.90%
Ohio	97.10%	8,291,239	8,541,239	4.00%
Oklahoma	84.70%	2,184,092	2,578,351	1.90%
Oregon	79.90%	2,153,914	2,695,058	0.60%
Pennsylvania	93.50%	8,758,031	9,363,381	4.70%
Rhode Island	93.00%	701,307	754,438	2.00%
South Carolina	77.90%	2,553,923	3,279,329	10.30%
South Dakota	96.20%	575,632	598,635	4.20%
Tennessee	87.10%	3,946,481	4,533,233	6.50%
Texas	91.80%	13,575,062	14,780,857	3.60%
Utah	80.10%	1,432,525	1,787,350	12.10%
Vermont	93.20%	454,466	487,430	2.20%
Virginia	91.50%	5,034,660	5,500,265	11.40%
Washington	80.00%	3,630,118	4,535,438	3.30%
West Virginia	86.00%	1,212,117	1,409,823	3.70%
Wisconsin	89.70%	3,688,195	4,113,565	-11.60%
Wyoming	72.50%	282,389	389,304	21.50%

Source: McDonald, M. 2008 General Election Voter Registration Statistics. United States Elections Project. Retrieved from http://elections.gmu.edu/Registration_2008G.html

APPENDIX 3B

Table 5.2. General Election Voter Registration Statistics by party affiliation on State by State bases.

State	Dem	Rep	Other	Indep	Total
Alaska	76,729	126,583	29,605	262,814	495,731
Arizona	1,161,982	1,262,871	28,103	988,185	3,441,141
California	7,683,495	5,428,052	747,621	3,444,923	17,304,091
Colorado	1,056,080	1,065,154	19,525	1,069,499	3,210,258
Connecticut	778,291	425,376	7,562	880,751	2,091,980
Delaware	279,167	181,850	140,331	0	601,348
District of Columbia	321,027	30,465	5,929	69,340	426,761
Florida	4,722,076	4,064,301	358,138	2,103,119	11,247,634
Iowa	749,530	634,680	1,263	804,685	2,190,158
Kansas	484,710	771,019	11,147	482,883	1,749,759
Kentucky	1,662,093	1,053,871	190,845	0	2,906,809
Louisiana	1,546,582	744,104	654,932	0	2,945,618
Maine	347,023	283,872	34,375	403,191	1,068,461
Maryland	1,946,823	927,798	72,370	485,654	3,432,645
Massachusetts	1,559,464	490,259	28,887	2,141,878	4,220,488
Nebraska	392,943	558,465	10,119	195,507	1,157,034
Nevada	625,109	513,574	78,632	229,110	1,446,425
New Hampshire	282,421	280,507	0	395,600	958,528
New Jersey	1,794,906	1,057,365	2,415	2,546,842	5,401,528
New Mexico	602,983	401,791	32,374	192,015	1,229,163
New York	5,831,445	3,054,520	621,653	2,523,694	12,031,312
North Carolina	2,849,979	1,994,494	3,370	1,385,487	6,233,330

Oklahoma	1,079,373	859,872	0	244,847	2,184,092
Oregon	929,741	695,677	96,574	431,922	2,153,914
Pennsylvania	4,480,691	3,243,391	568,981	464,968	8,758,031
Rhode Island	298,388	76,651	0	326,268	701,307
South Dakota	204,413	241,528	2,048	82,473	575,632
West Virginia	675,305	353,437	16,264	167,111	1,212,117
Wyoming	72,577	168,431	1,474	39,907	282,389

Source: McDonald, M. 2008 General Election Voter Registration Statistics. United States Elections Project. Retrieved from http://elections.gmu.edu/Registration_2008G.html

APPENDIX 4B

Table 5.3. Voter Registration Statistics by party affiliation on State by State bases - change from 2004-2008

State	Change '04 to '08				
	Dem	Rep	Other	Indep	Total
Alaska	6.60%	7.00%	-11.50%	4.70%	4.40%
Arizona	15.70%	10.90%	30.10%	35.10%	18.80%
California	7.90%	-5.50%	-2.30%	17.70%	4.50%
Colorado	11.40%	-5.40%	57.00%	3.90%	3.10%
Connecticut	16.40%	-3.90%	97.40%	-1.90%	3.90%
Delaware	15.80%	0.20%	9.20%		9.10%
District of Columbia	12.20%	0.90%	-12.40%	13.90%	11.20%
Florida	10.80%	4.40%	36.90%	11.50%	9.20%
Iowa	24.60%	4.20%		5.70%	11.10%
Kansas	6.70%	-1.50%	-4.80%	8.50%	3.30%
Kentucky	2.90%	5.70%	4.70%		4.00%
Louisiana	-4.40%	6.20%	8.40%		0.80%
Maine	8.70%	-1.20%	42.30%	2.60%	4.30%
Maryland	14.50%	2.90%	127.60%	11.10%	11.80%
Massachusetts	2.10%	-7.90%	-26.90%	7.10%	3.00%
Nebraska	-1.00%	-3.00%	4.40%	9.90%	-0.30%
Nevada	45.40%	18.30%	73.10%	41.80%	35.00%
New Hampshire	23.70%	5.00%		9.80%	12.00%
New Jersey	54.30%	19.50%	-87.50%	13.30%	7.90%
New Mexico	9.50%	11.70%	6.80%	16.40%	11.20%
New York	5.40%	-4.80%	-8.50%	4.50%	1.60%
North Carolina	10.40%	4.40%	-74.20%	35.30%	12.80%

Oklahoma	-2.00%	5.30%		8.70%	1.90%
Oregon	12.10%	-8.70%	32.90%	-9.60%	0.60%
Pennsylvania	12.40%	-4.80%	-41.70%		4.70%
Rhode Island					2.00%
South Dakota	6.70%	1.20%	71.80%	16.20%	4.20%
West Virginia	-0.80%	1.20%	61.90%	29.50%	3.70%
Wyoming	16.30%	15.10%	-93.80%		21.50%

Source: McDonald, M. 2008 General Election Voter Registration Statistics. *United States Elections Project*. Retrieved from http://elections.gmu.edu/Registration_2008G.html

APPENDIX 5B

Table 5.4. 2008 estimated voter turnout and turnout rate in the U.S. compared to the 2004 statistics.

State Mainpage	Election Results	2008 Unofficial Voting-Eligible Population Turnout Rate	Turnout Estimate	2008 Voting-Eligible Population	2004 VEP Turnout Rate	2008 Minus 2004 Turnout
United States		61.70%	131,302,732	212,720,027	60.10%	1.60%
Alabama	Certified	61.80%	2,099,819	3,398,289	57.20%	4.60%
Alaska	Certified	68.30%	326,197	477,763	69.10%	-0.80%
Arizona	Certified	56.00%	2,293,475	4,096,006	54.10%	1.90%
Arkansas	Certified	53.40%	1,086,617	2,033,146	53.60%	-0.20%
California	Certified	61.70%	13,561,900	21,993,429	58.80%	2.90%
Colorado	Certified	69.80%	2,401,361	3,441,907	66.70%	3.10%
Connecticut	Final	67.20%	1,646,792	2,451,296	65.00%	2.20%
Delaware	Final	66.20%	412,398	622,664	64.20%	2.00%
District of Columbia	Certified	60.70%	265,853	438,201	54.30%	6.40%
Florida	Final	67.50%	8,390,744	12,426,633	64.40%	3.10%
Georgia	Final	61.40%	3,924,440	6,390,590	56.20%	5.20%
Hawaii	Final	50.50%	453,568	898,922	48.20%	2.30%
Idaho	Final	63.30%	655,032	1,034,402	63.20%	0.10%
Illinois	Final	62.80%	5,523,051	8,794,625	61.50%	1.30%
Indiana	Final	59.40%	2,751,054	4,634,261	54.80%	4.60%
Iowa	Certified	69.90%	1,537,123	2,199,849	69.90%	0.00%
Kansas	Final	62.50%	1,235,872	1,978,713	61.60%	0.90%
Kentucky	Final	57.90%	1,826,508	3,156,794	58.70%	-0.80%
Louisiana	Final	62.10%	1,960,761	3,158,676	61.10%	1.00%
Maine	Final	71.40%	731,163	1,024,699	73.80%	-2.40%
Maryland	Certified	67.70%	2,631,596	3,888,726	62.90%	4.80%
Massachusetts	Certified	66.20%	3,080,985	4,652,749	64.20%	2.00%
Michigan	Final	68.90%	5,001,766	7,263,250	66.60%	2.30%

<u>Minnesota</u>	<u>Final</u>	78.20%	2,910,369	3,721,943	78.40%	-0.20%
<u>Mississippi</u>	<u>Certified</u>	61.00%	1,289,856	2,114,108	55.70%	5.30%
<u>Missouri</u>	<u>Certified</u>	68.10%	2,925,205	4,296,592	65.30%	2.80%
<u>Montana*</u>	<u>Final</u>	66.30%	491,960	741,538	64.40%	1.90%
<u>Nebraska</u>	<u>Certified</u>	62.70%	801,281	1,278,980	62.90%	-0.20%
<u>Nevada</u>	<u>Certified</u>	58.60%	967,848	1,652,846	55.30%	3.30%
<u>New Hampshire</u>	<u>Final</u>	71.30%	710,970	997,247	70.90%	0.40%
<u>New Jersey</u>	<u>Certified</u>	66.20%	3,868,237	5,844,477	63.80%	2.40%
<u>New Mexico</u>	<u>Final</u>	60.30%	830,158	1,376,025	59.00%	1.30%
<u>New York</u>	<u>Certified</u>	58.00%	7,640,640	13,183,464	58.00%	0.00%
<u>North Carolina</u>	<u>Certified</u>	65.80%	4,310,789	6,551,412	57.80%	8.00%
<u>North Dakota</u>	<u>Final</u>	65.00%	316,621	486,871	64.80%	0.20%
<u>Ohio</u>	<u>Final</u>	66.70%	5,698,260	8,541,239	66.80%	-0.10%
<u>Oklahoma</u>	<u>Final</u>	56.70%	1,462,661	2,578,351	58.30%	-1.60%
<u>Oregon</u>	<u>Certified</u>	67.80%	1,827,864	2,695,058	72.00%	-4.20%
<u>Pennsylvania*</u>	<u>Certified</u>	64.20%	6,012,692	9,363,381	62.60%	1.60%
<u>Rhode Island</u>	<u>Final</u>	62.30%	469,767	754,438	58.50%	3.80%
<u>South Carolina</u>	<u>Final</u>	58.60%	1,920,969	3,279,329	53.00%	5.60%
<u>South Dakota</u>	<u>Final</u>	63.80%	381,975	598,635	68.20%	-4.40%
<u>Tennessee</u>	<u>Final</u>	57.30%	2,599,749	4,533,233	56.30%	1.00%
<u>Texas</u>	<u>Final</u>	54.70%	8,077,795	14,780,857	53.70%	1.00%
<u>Utah</u>	<u>Final</u>	53.30%	952,370	1,787,350	58.90%	-5.60%
<u>Vermont</u>	<u>Certified</u>	66.70%	325,046	487,430	66.30%	0.40%
<u>Virginia</u>	<u>Final</u>	67.70%	3,723,260	5,500,265	60.60%	7.10%
<u>Washington</u>	<u>Final</u>	67.00%	3,036,878	4,535,438	66.90%	0.10%
<u>West Virginia</u>	<u>Final</u>	50.60%	713,362	1,409,823	54.10%	-3.50%
<u>Wisconsin</u>	<u>Certified</u>	72.50%	2,983,417	4,113,565	74.80%	-2.30%
<u>Wyoming</u>	<u>Final</u>	65.40%	254,658	389,304	65.70%	-0.30%

Source: McDonald, M. (12 March, 2009). 2008 Unofficial Voter Turnout. *United States Elections Project*. Retrieved from http://elections.gmu.edu/preliminary_vote_2008.html

APPENDIX 6B

Table 5.5. National Voter turnout statistics for federal elections from 1960-2008 in the U.S.

Year	Voting-age population	Voter registration	Voter turnout	Turnout of voting-age population (percent)
2008*	231,229,580	NA	132,618,580*	56.8%
2006	220,600,000	135,889,600	80,588,000	37.1%
2004	221,256,931	174,800,000	122,294,978	55.3
2002	215,473,000	150,990,598	79,830,119	37.0
2000	205,815,000	156,421,311	105,586,274	51.3
1998	200,929,000	141,850,558	73,117,022	36.4
1996	196,511,000	146,211,960	96,456,345	49.1
1994	193,650,000	130,292,822	75,105,860	38.8
1992	189,529,000	133,821,178	104,405,155	55.1
1990	185,812,000	121,105,630	67,859,189	36.5
1988	182,778,000	126,379,628	91,594,693	50.1
1986	178,566,000	118,399,984	64,991,128	36.4
1984	174,466,000	124,150,614	92,652,680	53.1
1982	169,938,000	110,671,225	67,615,576	39.8
1980	164,597,000	113,043,734	86,515,221	52.6
1978	158,373,000	103,291,265	58,917,938	37.2
1976	152,309,190	105,037,986	81,555,789	53.6
1974	146,336,000	96,199,020	55,943,834	38.2

1972	140,776,000	97,328,541	77,718,554	55.2
1970	124,498,000	82,496,747	58,014,338	46.6
1968	120,328,186	81,658,180	73,211,875	60.8
1966	116,132,000	76,288,283	56,188,046	48.4
1964	114,090,000	73,715,818	70,644,592	61.9
1962	112,423,000	65,393,751	53,141,227	47.3
1960	109,159,000	64,833,096	68,838,204	63.1

Source: Infoplease. (14 June, 2009). *National Voter Turnout in Federal Elections: 1960–2008*. Retrieved from <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0781453.html>

REFERENCES

- Abramowitz, A. I. (2007, April 12) "*Polarization Continues: A Look Back at the 2006 Midterm Elections.*" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Palmer House Hotel, Chicago, IL Online. Retrieved May 24, 2009 from http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p196964_index.html
- Aistrup, J. A. *The Southern Strategy Revisited: Republican Top-Down Advancement in the South.* University Press of Kentucky, 1996.
- Bartlett, B. (2004, July 7) "*Clinton Economics. Not so bad in the rear-view mirror.*" National Review Online. Retrieved March 28, 2009 from http://www.nationalreview.com/nrof_bartlett/bartlett200407070838.asp
- Berg, J. C. (2003, Nov) "*The Debate over Realigning Elections: Where Do We Stand Now?*" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the North Eastern Political Science Association, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Philadelphia, PA Online. Retrieved February 24, 2008 from http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p89598_index.html
- Berman, W. C. *America's right turn: from Nixon to Clinton.* Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998.
- Birkland, T. A. *An Introduction To The Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, And Models Of Public Policy Making.* M E Sharpe Inc., 2005.
- Black, E. & Black, M. *Divided America: The Ferocious Power Struggle in American Politics.* Simon and Schuster, 2008.
- Box-Steffensmeier, J. M. & Schier, S. E. *The American Elections of 2008.* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009.
- Burnham, W. D. *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics.* New York: W. W. Norton, 1970.
- Busch, A. E. *Reagan's victory: the presidential election of 1980 and the rise of the right.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005.
- Campbell, A., Converse, P. E., Miller, W. E., & Stokes, D. E. *The American Voter. Unabridged Edition.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.

- Campbell, B. A. & Trilling, R. J. *Realignment in American Politics*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980.
- Campbell, J. E. *The American campaign: U.S. presidential campaigns and the national vote*. Texas A&M University Press, 2008.
- CNN. "The era of big government is over." Retrieved March 30, 2009 from http://www.cnn.com/US/9601/budget/01-27/clinton_radio/
- Connelly, M. *Ailing G.O.P. Risks Losing a Generation*. The New York Times. Retrieved February 28, 2009 from http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/01/weekinreview/01connelly.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=connelly%200301&st=cse
- Dahl, R. A. & Lindbloom, C. E. *Politics, Economics, and Welfare*. New Brunswick, NJ, 2000.
- Dykman, J. & Gregory, S. *10 Elections That Changed America*. Time Magazine. Retrieved May 23, 2009 from <http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/0,28757,1856551,00.html>
- Edsforth, R. *The New Deal: America's response to the Great Depression*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2000.
- Erikson, R. S. & Tedin, K. L. 1981. The 1928-1936 Partisan Realignment: The Case for the Conversion Hypothesis. *American Political Science Review* 75: 951-962.
- Fiorina, Morris P. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.
- Fox Piven, F. & Cloward, R. A. *Why Americans Still Don't Vote: And Why Politicians Want It That Way*. Beacon Press, 2000.
- Frank, T. *What's the Matter with Kansas?: How Conservatives Won the Heart of America*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004.
- Gamm, G. H. *The Making of New Deal Democrats: Voting Behavior and Realignment in Boston, 1920-1940*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.
- Godwin, J. *Clintonomics: How Bill Clinton Reengineered the Reagan Revolution*. Amacom, 2009.
- Hames, T. & Rae, N. C. *Governing America: history, culture, institutions, organisation, policy*. Manchester University Press, 1996.

- Holt, M. F. Getting the Message Out! *National Political Campaign Materials, 1840-1860: Overview*. Retrieved June 1, 2009 from <http://dig.lib.niu.edu/message/ps-overview.html>
- Hummel, J. R. "The Constitution as Counter-Revolution: A Tribute to the Anti-Federalists". *The Journal of the Libertarian Alliance*, Vol. 5, No.4, Article 3 of 6.
- Jacobson, G. C. "Terror, Terrain, and Turnout: Explaining the 2002 Midterm Elections". *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 118, No.1 (April 15, 2003), pp. 1-22. Retrieved from <http://0-ejournals.ebsco.com.skyline.cudenver.edu/direct.asp?ArticleID=47DEA3D47AFC57090C3D>
- Joyner, J. (2005). *Iraq Versus Vietnam: A Comparison of Public Opinion*. Retrieved June 12, 2009 from http://www.outsidethebeltway.com/archives/iraq_versus_vietnam_a_comparison_of_public_opinion/
- Kohut, A. & Doherty, C. *Permanent Republican Majority? Think Again*. Retrieved December 2, 2008 from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/08/17/AR2007081701713.html>
- Key, V. O. "A Theory of Critical Elections". *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 17, No. 1:3-18, 1955.
- Lewis-Beck, M. S., Norpoth, H., & Jacoby, W. G. *The American voter revisited*. University of Michigan Press, 2008.
- Lichtman, A. "The keys to the White House: Prediction for 2008". *Social Education* 72.1 (Jan-Feb 2008): 10(4). General OneFile. Gale. Auraria Library. 2 May 2008
- Madison, J. (22 November, 1787). Republican Government. James Madison, Federalist, no. 10, 56—65. Retrieved from <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch4s19.html>
- Maisel, L. S. & Buckley, K. Z. *Parties and elections in America: The Electoral Process*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2004.
- Mayhew, D. R. "Electoral Realignments". *Annual Review of Political Science Journal*, Vol. 3, Issue 1: 449-474, 2000.
- Mayhew, D. R. *Electoral Realignments: A Critique of an American Genre*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.
- Miller, W. E., & Levitin, T. E. *Leadership and Change: The New Politics and the American Electorate*. Cambridge MA: Winthrop, 1976.

- Mintz, S. (2007). *Jacksonian Democracy: Rise of Democratic Politics*. Digital History. Retrieved May 31, 2009 from http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=633
- Mintz, S. (2007). *Jacksonian Democracy: The Presidency of Andrew Jackson*. Digital History. Retrieved May 31, 2009 from http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=637
- Mintz, S. (2007). *Impending Crisis: The Slave Power Conspiracy*. Digital History. Retrieved May 31, 2009 from http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=324
- Paulson, A. C. *Realignment and party revival: understanding American electoral politics at the turn of the twenty-first century*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2000.
- Paulson, A. C. *Electoral Realignment and the Outlook for American Democracy*. Northeastern University Press, 2006.
- Polling Report. *Direction of the Country*. Retrieved May 8, 2008 from <http://www.pollingreport.com/right.htm>
- Real Clear Politics. *RealClearPolitics Poll Averages: Generic Congressional Vote*. Retrieved May 1, 2008 from <http://www.realclearpolitics.com/polls/>
- Regnery, A. S. *Upstream: The Ascendance of American Conservatism*. New York: Threshold Editions, 2008.
- Retter, Daphne. (2 June, 2008). *Campaign Worker's Rant is a Disgrace*. New York Post. http://www.nypost.com/seven/06022008/news/nationalnews/campaign_workers_rant_is_a_disg_race_113521.htm
- Robinson, T. & Noriega, S. (2010). "Voter Migration as a Source of Electoral Change in the Rocky Mountain West". *Political Geography*. Forthcoming.
- Roper Center For Public Opinion Archives. *National Election Pool Poll # 2004-NATELEC: National Election Day Exit Poll*. Retrieved May 5, 2008 from http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/cgi-zbin/hsrun.exe/Roperweb/Catalog40/Catalog40.htx;start=TopSummary_Link?Archno=USMI2004-NATELEC
- Rosenof, T. *Realignment: The Theory That Changed the Way we Think About American Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.

- Rutgers University. *Electronic Government Project: Era of Good Feeling*. Retrieved May 26, 2009 from <http://www.eagleton.rutgers.edu/e-gov/e-politicalarchive-goodfeeling.htm>
- Sabato, L. J. (15 January, 2009). *The 2008 Election in Perspective: Just What We Would Have Expected*. Retrieved from <http://www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/article.php?id=LJS2009011501>
- Schofield, N., Miller, G., & Martin, A. 2003. "Critical Elections and Political Realignments in the USA: 1860–2000." *Political Studies Journal*, Vol. 51 Issue 2, p217-240
- Schantz, H. L. *American presidential elections: process, policy, and political change*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996.
- Schutt, R. K. *Investigating the Social World*. London : Sage Publications Ltd., 2006.
- Stephenson, D. G. *Campaigns and the court: the U.S. Supreme Court in presidential elections*. Columbia University Press, 1999
- Stonecash, J. M. and Silina, Everita. The 1896 Realignment: A Reassessment." *American Politics Research*. Jan 2005; Vol. 33, p3-32
- Stonecash, J. M. *Political Parties Matter. Realignment and the Return of Partisan Voting*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2006.
- Sundquist, J. L. *Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press., 1983.
- Taylor, G. "Judis, John B. and Ruy Teixeira. The Emerging Democratic Majority." *Booklist 99.1*: 26(2), 2002.
- Wickham, D. (2004, July 13). With Edwards, Democrats seek lost ground in South. USA Today, Retrieved September 5, 2009, from Academic Search Premier database.

